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Selections from  
Malory's  
Le Morte D'Arthur

*EDITED, WITH INTRODUCTION, NOTES, AND  
GLOSSARY, BY*

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## INTRODUCTION.

THE popularity of Arthurian Legend, and the influence which it has had on four centuries of English literature, is so great that apology perhaps is not required for adding another to the many editions of Malory's *Le Morte d'Arthur*. Some excuse, however, must always be made for publishing the work of an author in shortened form, and in defence of these selections the following pleas may be fairly urged. Owing partly to the nature of the task which Malory set himself to perform, and partly to the confusing way in which Caxton divided his work into chapters, the story as put before us in the Globe, the best of modern editions, is so intricate and difficult to follow that many readers, attracted at first by the beauty of the prose and by the 'noble feats' of Arthur and his knights, turn at last from the book with something akin to weariness and disgust. Malory's own example has therefore been followed, and just as he made 'selections' from the great mass of Arthurian romance, so this book has shortened Malory by leaving out incidents which interrupt and confuse the progress of the story, or are merely repetitions of the same

adventures in a different form. The whole of the 'Tristram' and part of the 'Launcelot,' belonging as they do to a distinct and separate branch of the romance, are omitted, and these selections attempt to put before the reader in connected form the 'Coming of Arthur,' the 'Quest of the Holy Grail,' the 'Launcelot and Elaine,' as well as the story of the events which, as they lead to the final catastrophe, have given to the whole book the name of *Le Morte d'Arthur*. The text of the Globe edition has been followed. This text has modernized the spelling, and in one or two instances only has eliminated expressions unsuitable to modern taste; but it has retained old grammatical forms, and after a careful comparison with Dr. Sommer's reprint, the editor of this book has been able to find only one or two instances where (with the exception of the spelling) the original text is not faithfully represented. The reader must therefore understand that it is Malory himself and not Malory in a modern dress that he will read in these pages. Malory's prose is so clear and comprehensible to the reader of to-day that to re-write his story is nothing less than a crime—a crime as great as it would be to put into nineteenth century form the language of the Bible or the *Adventures of Robinson Crusoe*. For these selections therefore the editor may fairly plead the example of Malory himself, and may say, as did Arthur, when he 'shorted' the giant by smiting off both his legs by the knee, "Now art thou better of a size to deal with than thou were." In the place of Caxton's division into chapters, which is no part of Malory's work, a new arrangement has been adopted; and as a help to the student of fifteenth century

English there have been added a glossary and a chapter on Malory's grammar, based, in accordance with a suggestion of Dr. Sommer, on Abbott's *Shakespearean Grammar*. An attempt has also been made in an Appendix to put before the reader an account of the 'Grail' literature, and of the difficult questions which it involves. The notes, as far as possible, explain points of interest which arise in the text or in the story; but those, to whom notes, glossaries, and grammars are no better than the 'vexing of dreams,' may discard them altogether and confine themselves to the enjoyment of the magic words of the author, who tells even better than our own poet these 'sad stories of the death of kings.'

With this much by way of preface, an attempt must now be made to investigate the causes of the wonderful popularity which, for seven centuries at least, Arthurian legend has enjoyed in our own country, and by this investigation to trace the gradual growth of the vast body of literature in which it has found expression.

(Arthurian legend has, to put the matter shortly, enjoyed this popularity because it combines two main elements—the glorification of a national hero) and a collection of national fairy tales. The word 'national,' be it noted, is used deliberately, for the Normans could, in their dislike for the Saxons, adopt Arthur as a hero of their own, just as a later age could look on an Arthur, a Hereward, and a Richard I., though differing in race, as all alike national heroes. And the fairy tales, though Celtic in origin, soon lost their distinctive dress and became part of the folklore of the nation.

Arthurian  
Legend



Celtic saints, moreover, had from the first been celebrated in Anglo-Norman poetry, and the *Legend of St. Brandan* is the subject of the poem dedicated by Benedict to Adelaide, the wife of Henry I. (Ten Brink, I. 137).

The Historie  
Arthur.

When, however, Arthur is called a national hero, a belief in his actual existence is necessarily implied, and, as from the days of Caxton there have ever been "divers men who hold that there was no such Arthur, and that all such books as been made of him be but feigned and fables," it is important that this belief should be as far as possible justified. An attempt will therefore be made to state clearly what history has to say on the subject, and to distinguish this from what is merely a tradition or belief.

1. The Saxon  
Chronicle.

The formation of the Saxon kingdom of Wessex began in A.D. 495, when Cerdic and Cynric landed at Cerdics-ora, and "the same day fought against the Welsh" (*A.S. Chr.*). In 519 A.D. Cerdic and Cynric "obtained the kingdom of the West Saxons" (*id.*). No part of Somerset, however, was conquered by the Saxons till the time of Ceawlin, who in 577 defeated the Britons at Deorham (Dyrham near Chipping Sodbury), and took Gloucester, Cirencester, and Bath (*id.*). He also conquered Somerset as far as the Axe (Freeman). Thus we find that during the early years of the sixth century the Saxons were successfully kept out of Somerset.

2. Gildas.

Gildas, the British Jeremiah, was born in the year of the battle of Mt. Badon, and is therefore a contemporary authority. He mentions Ambrosius Aurelianus, the last of the Romans, who led the Britons successfully

against the Saxons, and he goes on to say, that sometimes the British, sometimes the enemy won, till the year of the siege of Mt. Badon (A.D. 516),<sup>1</sup> near the mouth of the Severn, "nearly the last but not the least slaughter of the enemy" (*Hist.* § 26). He makes no mention of Arthur, and this would be very important were it not that he is absolutely vague as to this period, and mentions in his *History* no British king or chief except Vortigern. In his *Epistle* he bitterly upbraids five British kings—Constantine (see note on 186. 12), Aurelius Conanus, Vortiporius, Cuneglasus and Maglocunus, who are his contemporaries, and rule over different parts of the island. Maglocunus he calls *insularis draco* (cf. note on Pendragon, 7. 1.), and accuses him of having oppressed, in his early youth, with "sword, spear, and fire, the king his uncle and his brave soldiers, whose faces were like young lions." He also charges him with forcibly carrying off and openly marrying the wife of his nephew.

The *Historia Britonum*, ascribed to Nennius, is the s. Nennius. next authority; but, as the authorship is quite uncertain, this cannot be said to have the weight that attaches to Gildas. The work is attributed (1) to Nennius, (2) to Mark the Anchorite—both of whom seem to have lived in the ninth century, and (3) to Gildas himself. The conclusion of the editor of *Monumenta Historica Britannica* is that the authorship has yet to be determined, but that the principal portion of the work was written long before Bede flourished, and that a first edition of the work appeared in A.D. 674.

<sup>1</sup> Or 493, according to M. de la Borderie, whose view is accepted by Rhys (*Celtic Britain*, 108).

The earliest MS. is of the tenth century. (Pref. to *M.H.B.*, pp. 68, 108, 109.) M. de la Borderie, on the other hand, claims to have proved that the whole work was by one author, and was written in A.D. 822.

The *Historia Britonum* says that "in those days Arthur fought with the kings of the Britains" against the Saxons, that he won twelve battles in different parts of Britain, in the eighth of which he bore on his shoulders the image of the Virgin; and that the twelfth was Mt. Badon, where he slew 940 men with his own hand. In this, the first historical mention of Arthur, his exploits have already become to some extent legendary.

4. *Annales Cambriae.*

The *Annales Cambriae*, the earliest MS. of which is of the end of the tenth or beginning of the eleventh century, contain notices which, "though very brief, are highly valuable" (Pref. to *M.H.B.*, p. 93). According to these "Annals," "the best of all existing authorities" (*Id.*, p. 60), the battle of Mt. Badon was fought in 516, "in which battle Arthur carried the cross of our Lord on his shoulders three days and three nights, and the Britons were victors." Under the year 537 the "Annals" say, "The battle of Camlann, in which Arthur and Medraut fought."

This closes the list of historical references to the subject. The history of Geoffrey, though probably containing much that is true, is so mixed with fable that it is worthless as evidence.

To sum up these results, we have the following facts :

- (1) The Saxons were kept out of Somerset till 577 ;
- (2) In 516 (possibly 493) they were beaten at a

great and decisive battle at Mt. Badon; (3) the conqueror of Mt. Badon was named Arthur. The first two statements may be regarded as certain, and the third as falling but little short of absolute certainty.

Turning to indirect evidence, we have the traditions and legends current among the Welsh, in which Arthur is always called *amherawdyr* or *imperator*. Now, under Roman rule, there were three great officers—the *Comes Britanniae*, the *Comes Littoris Saxonici*, and the *Dux Britanniarum*, of whom the first had general, and the two latter local military control (*Notitia utriusque Imperii*). In Welsh the successors of the last two are called by the inferior name of *gwledig* or prince. Arthur's special title of *imperator* would be explained by the hypothesis that he was *comes Britanniae*, and that when the power of Rome ceased the title was given to this officer, as being the chief of the three. This would also fit in with the words of Nennius quoted above, "fought with the kings of the Britons" (*Rhŷs, Arthurian Legend*, p. 7). Moreover, the name 'Arthur' is, as was first pointed out by the late Mr. Coote in his *Romans of Britain* (p. 189), the equivalent of the Latin name *Artorius*. In any case tradition and legend alike testify to the existence of a successful warrior named Arthur, who defeated the Saxons. Secondly, the geographical details of the legends themselves fit in, on the whole, with the hypothesis. Camelot (Cadbury), Caerleon, Silchester, and Rutupae (mentioned by Geoffrey) are the chief scenes of the story, and are names that could hardly have been supplied by writers in the time of Henry II. Lastly, Gildas' account of Maglocunus (the

5. Indirect Evidence.

Maelgwyn of the Welsh), has, as was first pointed out by Professor Sayce (see *Academy*, Aug. 30, Sept. 6, 13, 27, 1884), a very strong resemblance to the story of Mordred, and it must be noted that the fact that Arthur's name is omitted in connection with Mt. Badon is not so remarkable when we remember that Gildas has also omitted the name of the king, the leader of the lion-like troops defeated by Maglocunus. The *Annales Cambriae*, inasmuch as they have no other entry under the year 537, also add to the evidence of an historic Mordred, and one other piece of evidence will be adduced later.

The Mythical  
Arthur.

Turning now to the tales of wonder and magic and adventure with which the Arthurian legend is associated, these have been clearly shown by Professor Rhys to be Celtic in their origin. He accounts for their association with Arthur by the hypothesis that there was a Brythonic divinity named Arthur, or with a name so closely resembling Arthur that the two names were identified. This name is assumed to be Artor, which means 'the ploughman' (root *ar*, Latin *aro*), and may be compared with the Gaulish epithet of the god called in Latin *Mercurius Artaius*, i.e., *Mercurius Cultor*. This Brythonic deity was either a 'Culture Hero' or perhaps the Celtic Zeus, and he may be compared with Airem in Irish mythic history. Guenever is to be compared with Etain, the wife of Airem, who was carried off by Mider, the fairy king, just as Guenever herself was seized by Meleagrance and afterwards by Mordred. Meleagrance is Melwas, whose realm is the abode of the dead, and the capture of Guenever and Etain, are, mythologically speaking, expressions

of the one idea of the god of darkness carrying away the goddess of dawn. It is easy to find parallels in Celtic myth to the other heroes of Arthur's court, *e.g.* Gawaine or Gwalchmai (of the *Mabinogion*) is the Solar Hero (cf. 159. 23 of our text and the note), and he too is killed by Mordred, the Power of Darkness. But according to the mythic idea, the Solar Hero should have returned ; it is not Gawaine, however, but Arthur, the Culture Hero, who survives to himself subdue the Power of Darkness. "In this unmythlike ending we may possibly detect the disturbing influence of a historical fact." The Grail stories too are Celtic in origin, and the Grail itself may be compared to the Cauldron of the Head of Hades, or the Cauldron of Bran with its life-restoring powers. For further information on this part of the subject, the reader is referred to Rhys' *Studies in the Arthurian Legend*, from which the foregoing account is derived.<sup>1</sup> Enough has been said, however, to show that the legends as we have them do possess this combination of a historical with a mythological element, and it is no doubt to this that we may attribute their extraordinary vitality. It is now also easy to see an explanation of the existence of fragments of Arthur legend in places remote from Somerset. In Scotland, and even in Sicily (though here we might suspect that a local legend has assumed under Norman rule an Arthurian dress), we find hills under which sleep Arthur and his men, who one day will come again.

<sup>1</sup> With the main results of Professor Rhys' investigation it is impossible to disagree, but for some of the incidents of the story a different explanation will be suggested later.

Breton *lais*

The knowledge of this Arthurian legend, confined for some centuries to Brittany and Wales, was in the first instance extended by means of the Breton *lai*, the natural and appropriate home of the Celtic saga. On these *lais* were based the songs recited by the *jongleur* in the Norman and French Courts, and these songs may be considered in part the basis of the Arthurian romance, which made its appearance in literary form in the twelfth century.<sup>1</sup>

Geoffrey of  
Monmouth.

This appearance was due to Geoffrey, Archdeacon of Monmouth, and afterwards Bishop of St. Asaph, who, about the year 1145 published his famous *Historia Britonum*—a history which he pretends to have translated from a very ancient book in the British tongue brought to him by Walter, Archdeacon of Oxford, which contained the history of all the British kings from the first king Brutus to Cadwallader, the son of Cadwallo. This book is the most extraordinary jumble of impossible fiction with fragments of history, and its nature may be judged from the following examples. Brutus is the grandson of Ascanius, the son of Aeneas. Brennius, a later king, is identified with or invented from Brennus, the Gaul who sacked Rome, and Bladud was the founder of Bath when Haggai prophesied in Israel. He is generally supposed to have invented the whole of this wonderful story, but as Dunlop says, in his *History of Fiction*, he probably derived a large part from Breton romances, and mixed up with it passages from Nennius and other more or

<sup>1</sup> Rhŷs does not accept the view expressed by Ten Brink that the Tristan saga is independent of the Arthurian saga. (Ten Brink, i. 174, R. *A.L.* 378.)

less historical sources. Be that as it may, and though the book is of course worthless as a historical authority, it is hard to over-estimate the effect which it has produced on English literature from that time till the days of Shakspeare himself, who borrowed from it the story of King Lear.

The immediate effect produced upon Geoffrey's contemporaries can only be understood when we remember that his was the age of the wandering story-teller, the jongleur, and troubadour, who spread from castle to castle and court to court the lays which they recited or sang to the accompaniment of the harp. Many of these Welsh stories were therefore known not only in Wales and in Brittany, but in Normandy and at the court of the English king. It was, too, the time of the Crusades, when warriors returning home brought back wonderful tales of the magic East, and when the valiant deeds of mighty knights were the surest way to the hearts of fair ladies. This was therefore an age only too glad to accept without criticism any account, however fabulous, of the unknown past. As far as the story of Arthur goes, Geoffrey gives us the tale of Merlin and a history of Arthur, the chief feature of which is the war in which he conquered Western Europe. This war is described at great length, but Geoffrey has nothing to say about Launcelot, the Grail, Percivale, or Gawaine, or any of the knights of King Arthur except Bedver, the butler, who is killed in the Roman War. Geoffrey then did not add much to the legend, but as a history it was received with delight, and credulously believed by a court only too anxious, as Gibbon points out, to glorify the British at the expense of the hated



Saxon. For the poet and romance writer Geoffrey's *History* served to give the necessary historical framework or background to the legends which were already recited or sung in many a castle hall, and the Arthurian romance immediately sprang into literary existence.

Wace.

As early as 1155 the Anglo-Norman *trouvère* Wace, a native of Jersey, turned Geoffrey's Latin Chronicle into verse. This in its turn was so popular that it has led to the loss of what would have been very interesting to see—an earlier version by Gaimar, another Anglo-Norman *trouvère*. In all the MSS. of Gaimar the earlier part has been omitted, and Wace's *Brut* put in its place.

Chrestien and  
the Romance  
writers.

About this time (before 1200) appeared also the romances of Chrestien de Troyes, to be immediately followed by those of Gautier de Douzens, Robert de Boron, Manessier, Gerbert, and others, one of which is attributed, in all probability wrongly, to Walter Map. Wace's *Brut* was turned into Early English verse by Layamon before 1200.

Layamon was born in Worcestershire on the banks of the Severn, and appears to have been thoroughly familiar with British traditions. Hence he has not only the credit of being the first poet to celebrate Arthurian legend in English verse, but he has added largely from his own store to the *Brut* of Wace. Geoffrey was translated again into Anglo-French verse by Pierre de Langtoft in the reign of Edward I. His *History* is also the basis of the *English Metrical Chronicle of the Kings of England from the Siege of Troy to the death of Henry III.*, written in 1298 by Robert, the monk of

Gloucester. With these later versions of the *Brut* and the *Chronicles* we are not now concerned, but to the romance writers mentioned above, and to Wace and Layamon we owe nearly the whole of the great mass of Arthurian legend very much in the form in which we now possess it. To Chrestien the earliest, and perhaps the most important of these writers, we owe *Le Conte del Graal* and most of the Percivale and Launcelot tales, and to Robert de Boron the Merlin and the early history of the Grail. The Grail legends may be said to form a separate class, and for a more particular account of the literature of this subject the reader is referred to the Appendix. Following on and based on the works of the above-mentioned writers come in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries a considerable number of English metrical romances, the authorship of which is unknown.

The next point which demands our attention is the form or dress in which these romances were presented to the world, and here it is necessary to insist once more on the somewhat remarkable fact that this enormous mass of romance was chiefly produced between the end of the twelfth and the middle of the thirteenth centuries. It is therefore in the dress of this time that the *dramatis personae* appear on the stage. Arthur and his knights, whether historic or mythical, appear in the armour and with the manners and morals of the barons and knights of Henry II. and his sons, and of Henry III. The influence of the Crusades is clearly to be traced, and we shall find in the stories a distinct reflection of the teaching and power of the Church at that time. Indeed, it is not too much to say that in

The form or dress in which the Romance appeared.

Arthur and his knights we may see portrayed the characters of the most important actors on the stage of contemporary life. To this point reference will again be made. (See p. xxviii.)

But though the general form of the original romance is retained by successive writers, it is interesting to note their efforts to make the story appear life-like and modern, by the introduction of slight alterations and additions in keeping with the events of their own time. Thus, in the twelfth century romances we have references to the doctrine of transubstantiation, to the Ordeal by Combat, to the Cistercians and to the incidents of feudal tenure. In the later versions allusion is made to the influence of the Commons, to the inquiry by a jury into civil disputes, to Parliament, to artillery and possibly to the Wars of the Roses. In the same way Dover is substituted for the earlier Rutupae, and the bishop of Rochester and archbishop of Canterbury take the places of the bishop of Gloucester and of the archbishop of Legions.<sup>1</sup>

The steps in  
the evolution  
of the  
Romance.

We must now proceed to give some account of the immediate sources from which Malory has drawn his *Noble Book of King Arthur*. Here it will be well to recapitulate the various steps in the evolution of Arthurian romance. They are as follows: (1) a historic Arthur; (2) a mythical Arthur, with whom he is identified; (3) the gradual growth around this central figure of a mass of Celtic folklore tales; (4) the development of this growth into the *lai* and the song of the *jongleur*; (5) the

<sup>1</sup> See the notes on 91. 20, 26. 11, 29. 22, 137. 15, 48. 30, 14. 26, 59. 6 and 8, 14. 13, 180. 3, 161. 19, 162. 20, 163. 27, 164. 4, 147. 19, 10. 10.

publication of Geoffrey's *Historia Britonum*, to be immediately followed by the appearance of these *lais* and songs in literary form, and in the dress of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.

Before Malory's time Arthurian romance may be said to have crystallized into three distinct forms, which deal (1) with Merlin and the early history of Arthur, (2) with Launcelot, including the Quest of the Grail and the death of Arthur, (3) with Tristram; and it is these three separate romances which Malory has attempted to combine into one continuous story. Owing to the exhaustive labours of Dr. Sommer, we are now able to trace to their immediate source all the books of Malory except the seventh, containing the adventures of Beaumains, the hero of Tennyson's *Gareth and Lynette*. The original of this story has yet to be found. Most of Malory's sources were, as he says, "French books," but his fifth book is a prose rendering of the English metrical romance called *La Morte Arthur*, by a Scotch poet named Huchown, and Books XVIII., XX., and XXI. are partly taken from an English metrical version called *Le Morte Arthur*. Malory's sources.

The table on the next page, which has been constructed from Dr. Sommer's large table (III., 12), will show clearly all Malory's sources. A more particular account of the sources of those books from which these selections have been made will be found in the notes introductory to each part.

On the nature of Malory's work two widely differing views have been expressed. Sir Edward Strachey regards him as having consciously planned and produced a great prose epic, while others look on him as a Malory's work

*Zusammenstoppler*, a more or less clumsy manufacturer of a literary patchwork quilt. From the internal evidence of the book it seems clear that to Malory the whole story presented itself as the definite working out of a great tragedy, the punishment of an unconscious

TABLE OF SOURCES.

CLASS OF ROMANCE	MALORY'S BOOKS.	PARTICULAR SOURCE.
Merlin	I.-IV.	Boron's 'Merlin,' 'Ordinary Merlin,' 'Suite de Merlin' (French).
	V.	Huchown's 'La Morte Arthur' (English).
Lancelot	VI.	'Lancelot' attributed to Map (French).
Uncertain	VII.	Unknown.
Tristram	VIII.-X. (part)	'Tristan,' attributed to the fictitious Luces de Gast (French).
Merlin	X. 32-50	'Prophecies of Merlin.'
Lancelot	XI.-XII. XIII.-XVII. XVIII.-XXI.	'Lancelot,' as above. 'La Queste del Saint Graal' (part 3 of 'Lancelot' as above). 'La Morte au Roi Artus' (part 4 of 'Lancelot'), and 'Le Morte Arthur' (English Metrical Version). (Part of XIX. is uncertain.)

sin, and reference to this *motif* is frequently made. King Lot's wife of Orkney came to Carlion "to espy the court of King Arthur, and she was a passing fair lady, wherefore the king cast great love unto her; but all this time King Arthur knew not that King Lot's wife

was his sister" (M. I. 17). Later, Merlin says to him, "Ye have done a thing late that God is displeased with you, and your sister shall have a child that shall destroy you, and all the knights of your realm" (M. I. 18). To destroy this child Arthur sends all the children born on May Day to sea in a ship (the only cruel or unknighly act recorded of him), but Mordred alone is wonderfully saved and brought up by a good man, to become, in after time, the means of vengeance on Arthur (M. I. 25). Again, "Merlin told unto King Arthur of the prophecy that there should be a great battle beside Salisbury, and Mordred, his own son, should be against him" (M. II. 11). So in the last act but one of the drama, though it is Agravaine who takes the chief part in denouncing the Queen, and Gawaine, whose thirst for vengeance prevents a reconciliation between Arthur and Launcelot, yet to Mordred a distinct part is assigned, and in the final catastrophe Mordred's rebellion causes Gawaine to forgive Launcelot, that Mordred may be left as the sole remaining instrument of vengeance on Arthur. Nor does it seem to be accidental that in the last great fight every soldier of Mordred is killed, and he is left alone on the field to slay with his own hand his father, the king. Malory, moreover, has been blamed for applying to his book the name which in the romances belongs only to the later part. But this may well have been done with deliberate intention, for to the story, regarded as a tragedy, the Death of Arthur is the most appropriate name that could be chosen.

It would appear then that Strachey is correct in his view, and that in Malory's *Morte d'Arthur* we have

treated in epic form a great English tragedy, which in design may be compared with the Greek tragedies connected with the house of Laius. But, admitting that this was Malory's conception, it cannot, on the other hand, be denied that the design is but ill carried out. The book is too long, the incidents are too numerous, are wanting in coherence, and are often contradictory. The materials, however, from which Malory drew presented, no doubt, enormous difficulties. Some idea of the inordinate length of the romances may be gathered from Mr. Nutt's *Studies on the Legend of the Holy Grail*, where the mere summaries, though in print, offer a formidable task to the reader. And when we reflect that every one of Malory's sources was in MS. (most of which were in Anglo-French), and that they were themselves in many instances mutually incoherent and contradictory, ample excuse may be found for the faulty execution of the book.

But whichever view be adopted, Malory's claim to high literary rank rests on other and surer grounds. He is the first great English prose writer, and his book, owing to its popularity, has done more perhaps than any other of the works printed by Caxton to fix the literary style of the sixteenth century.

Malory's  
style.

The *Morte d'Arthur* was written in 1470, and by this time the period of Middle English was drawing to a close. Between Middle and Modern English it is, of course, impossible to draw a hard and fast line, and Malory may be said either to close the one period or to begin the other, or perhaps with greater truth to mark the transition between the two periods. The English of Chaucer presents considerable difficulty to

the ordinary reader, but in the seventy years after his death the development of the language was so rapid that the English of Caxton is intelligible without more than an occasional reference to a glossary. Of this transitional period there are many marks in Malory, who uses old and new forms, in some cases side by side. These and other forms now obsolete are collected and discussed in the Note on Malory's Grammar.

Malory has not been able to conceal the fact that most of his work is a translation, but French usages and constructions though present do not detract from the forcible and idiomatic nature of his English. And even when he is adapting from an English metrical version he is able to give just the turn or add just the word which is wanting to make the picture life-like and clear. "Their horses went in blood past the fetlocks" is an improvement on the versifier's "stedys. . . Amonge hem waden in the blode." Where he discards or forgets the metrical version he is at his best; the sentences, "he laid them cold to the earth" (killed them), and "the best of us all had been full cold at the heart-root had not Sir Launcelot been better than we," are the work of a master hand. The "mariner's noise of hale and how," the horse's knees which "brast to the hard bone," and the curse which the bishop "did in the most orgulous wise that might be done," are instances of the artist's power of producing a picture by a few bold lines. Malory is no less happy in his use of simile and metaphor, in which he is seldom commonplace. A hermit, for instance, is clad 'in a religious weed, and in the armour of our Lord.' Sir Tristram, in the *mêlée*, "fared among those knights like a greyhound among the conies," and



the dying Sir Hemison says, with splendid alliteration, "the deep draughts of death draw to my heart that I may no longer live."

In the use of epithets Malory is somewhat sparing: they are too often conventional and suffer from repetition, but we meet occasionally with epithets that are both appropriate and add to the picture. Sir Dinadan is afraid of Sir Launcelot's "boisterous spear," while Arthur seizes his "with a great eager heart." Sir Tristram burnt all the ships of the Saxons unto the "cold water," and when wounds are inflicted "the hot blood" falls "fresh to the earth."<sup>1</sup>

It is, however, in dignity and pathos that Malory perhaps most excels; and few passages in English literature can be found to match the stately music of the prose in which Malory describes the death of Arthur, the mourning of Launcelot at the death of Guenever, or Ector's lament when he saw the body of his brother Launcelot lying dead in his castle of Joyous Gard.

The morality  
of the *Morte*  
d'Arthur

When we consider the nature of Malory's work, any reflections on the moral purpose of the book would appear to be superfluous, nor can we justly credit the author with any definite intention of "pointing a moral" by the incidents which he uses to "adorn" his "tale." As Caxton, however, by his preface has distinctly and boldly challenged criticism in this respect, and as this challenge was promptly accepted by serious writers of the next century and has again been supported

<sup>1</sup> Most of these quotations are taken from passages not included in this book, in the hope that they may induce the reader to extend his knowledge of Malory.

by modern critics, some comment would appear to be necessary.

Caxton claims that all was "written for our doctrine and for to beware that we fall not to vice nor sin, but to follow virtue." Ascham, on the other hand, with the fiery zeal of the reformer, selects the *Morte d'Arthur* from the books of chivalry "made by idle monks or wanton canons," for especial condemnation. The whole pleasure of the book he says, "standeth in two especial points, in open manslaughter and bold bawdry, in which book those he counted the noblest knights that do kill most men without any quarrel, and commit foulest advouteries by subtlest shifts. This is good stuff for wise men to laugh at, or honest men to take pleasure at. Yet I know when God's Bible was banished the Court and Mort Arthur received into the Prince's Chamber. What toys the daily reading of such a book may work in the will of a young gentleman or a young maid that liveth wealthily and idly, wise men can judge and honest men do pity." *The Scholemaster. Arber's Reprint*, p. 80.

Readers of Tennyson again, expect to find in Malory an Arthur, a Launcelot, and a Galahad such as they know in the *Idylls of the King*, and Malory's *Noble Tale of the Sangreal* has been, even by sober critics, extravagantly praised for the moral lesson which it enforces.

Malory, however, has himself contributed little or nothing to the development of the characters of the book, who owe their personality entirely to the authors from whom he drew. But if we bear this in mind, a brief consideration of Arthur and his knights, as we find them, not in Tennyson, but in the *Morte d'Arthur*,

may throw some light on the very different views expressed by Caxton and by the tutor of Queen Elizabeth.

The romances, it must be remarked at once, are, with the exception of the *Queste del Graal*, devoid of any definite moral purpose, nor are they on that account the worse; but they do draw a hard and fast line between virtue and vice, according to the best standard of the age in which they were written.

Arthur.

(Arthur, in Malory, is the ideal of the feudal lord who by his own might can and does win the submission of his vassals, who can protect them from outward assault, and settle internal quarrels with justice and wisdom. Obscure in origin like William I., he gains the submission of his own barons and then proceeds to further conquests. Like William I. also he is ruthless in the overthrow of his enemies, and "open manslaughter" is the means by which his power is attained. But like William he is also just, and so he "was never shamed of his promise." He has, too, the kingly gift of retaining the allegiance of his best men, and his end is due, like that of Henry II., to the rebellion of his own son. His relations with women are exactly in keeping with those of his age, in whose judgment the only "bad false love" was that of the married man for any woman but his wife (see *Ten Brink*, Bk. II., c. vii.). Hence he was never untrue to Guenever. He is, of course, the central figure of the romance, and the natural tendency of the age was to ascribe to such a hero every possible virtue and to add to his exploits from every conceivable source. Alexander the Great was in the same way the hero of numerous romances, and in poems of the twelfth century by Lambert the

Crooked and Alexander de Paris he is held up, says Ten Brink, as a "standard not only for kings but also for knights, ecclesiastics, matrons, and maidens." (T. B. I. 166.)

Here then, if a short digression may be allowed, we <sup>A digression</sup> may find the possible explanation of some of the incidents of the Arthurian legend. Professor Rhys would trace the continental wars of Arthur to Celtic myth, and sees in this incident the survival of the Culture Hero's visit to Hades. Is it not more likely that this story of the conquest of Rome has, instead of a mythical, a quasi-historical source, and that Geoffrey, with some confused knowledge of the history of Constantine the Great or of Maximus, both of whom were connected with Britain, either ignorantly or intentionally transferred to Arthur some of the events which were associated with their names? This at any rate appears to be exactly what he has done with his mythical *Brennius*. Again, while the carrying away of Guenever by Meleagraunce (M., Bk. XIX.) seems to be exactly explained by a reference to Celtic myth, the story of Mordred has not only, as Professor Rhys points out, an unmythlike ending, but it has also so strong a resemblance to a story from everyday life, that one is inclined to see in it only a small fragment of ancient history dressed up in twelfth century attire. Gildas and Nennius supply between them some historical foundation for the incident, and the development of the story may easily be supplied from the writer's experience. It is, of course, curiously parallel to the conduct of John to his father and his brother Richard, but the date of Geoffrey's *Historia* makes it

clear that the treacherous seizing of the kingdom by Mordred is not founded on the action of John during the absence of his brother.

Guenever. To return to the characters of our story, the Guenever of Malory does not call for special comment. It should be noted, however, that while in Tennyson it is the woman who is chiefly to blame, in Malory she is either not blamed at all or her fault is no greater than that of Launcelot. But with her, as with her lover, repentance is aroused not by the remembrance of a guilty love so much as by the thought that their love has entailed such unfortunate consequences.

Launcelot In Launcelot we have the beau ideal of chivalry as seen, perhaps, in Richard I. He is invincible in knightly contest and he never fails in courtesy, while his intrigue with the queen is entirely in keeping with the ideas of his age when every knight had his lady love (usually a married woman), to whose service he was devoted. Hence the poet's lines,

"His honour rooted in dishonour stood,  
And faith unfaithful kept him falsely true,"

partly but not completely describe his position. His attachment to Guenever, according to the standard of the day, was a matter not of dishonour at all, but rather of honour, and to this honourable attachment he was, as every knight should be, true till the end. He was "falsely true," not to Guenever, but to Arthur, who unfortunately combined the parts of husband of his lady-love and of feudal superior. Launcelot's repentance is not for his love, illicit according to our notions, but for the fact that an attachment, honourable enough

when judged by the standard of his day, had led him into the false position of rebellion against his feudal lord. Here we have the key to the whole story. Launcelot, as the model knight, has to choose between two conflicting duties—he would have been shamed for ever had he deserted the queen; but having once accomplished her rescue, he is ready to submit to any and every humiliation rather than fight against Arthur, “for I would never see that most noble king that made me knight neither slain ne shamed.” The war too, be it noted, is caused directly by Gawaine’s violence, and Launcelot plays throughout an unwilling part.

While Launcelot represents the polished, courteous Gawaine. knight, attaining in every respect to the highest standard of chivalry, Gawaine gives us the interesting picture of the man of every-day life. In the earlier romances, and even in the later *Gawaine and the Greene Knight*, he was as much the ideal knight as Launcelot himself, but in our romance he has a different but a distinct individuality. Impetuous and eager, he is the first to undertake the Quest of the Grail; but the same impetuosity leads to his slaying his sworn brother, and evaporates before the Quest is attained. In the last books we see the passionate desire to avenge the death of his brother, which characterized the feuds between the great houses of the time. He is, as the hermit says, a “murderer,” but he only differs from others in so far as the violence natural to his age is neither redeemed by the softening influence of a service vowed to a lady, nor mitigated by obedience to the teaching of the Church. He soon wearies of the good advice of the hermit, and we may sum up his character by

saying that he is the photograph and not the artist's portrait of an average baron of the time.

The 'Queste  
del Saint  
Graal.'

In the 'Queste' the chief heroes, Galahad and Percival, are enveloped in a mysticism which detracts from the reality of their characters, but the 'Queste' stands to some extent apart from the rest of the books in that the author, whoever he was, does appear to have had a distinct purpose in view. Much praise has been bestowed on him for his lofty conception of the ideal of a true knight, and more especially for his reverent treatment of womanhood. Mr. Nutt, on the other hand, says that "he who draws such lofty and noble teachings from the 'Queste del Saint Graal' must first bring them himself," and sees in his treatment of women nothing but a minute working out of the monkish theory that woman was a hindrance, in any and every relation, to the attainment of the kingdom of God. This is doubtless true, but it is only part of the truth. What we have to remember is this, that between the treatment of the legend by Chrestien and by the author of the 'Queste,' an enormous advance has been made. In Chrestien chastity is not a virtue at all. His continuator Gerbert treats the subject in a different spirit; but he, on Mr. Nutt's own showing, is later than and has been influenced by the 'Queste.' The 'Queste,' moreover, is remarkable for its presentment in the story of Launcelot of the moral struggle between the inclination to sin and the desire of virtue. The story of Bors and Lionel is also worthy of notice as an example of 'piety,' to use the word in its classical sense, which at that time must have been rarely found in actual life. The 'Queste' at any rate deserves this praise. It is the

direct outcome of the best and highest teaching of the Church in that age. This teaching was egoistic in its tendency, its object being to enable a man to work out his own salvation regardless of those among whom he lived. It was not till the beginning of the thirteenth century that a new and loftier aim was set before the world by St. Francis and St. Dominic, the founders of the Orders of Friars, whose teaching reminded the Christian world of the long-forgotten truth, that the noble life consisted in sacrificing self to bring about the good of others. The author of the 'Queste' is also entitled to credit for the skilful way in which he uses the failings of the minor characters, partly as a foil to set off the ideal purity of Galahad, and partly to adapt the teaching of the book to the capabilities of natures of a baser mould. Galahad alone would be wearisome, and would inspire but little emulation; but the struggles of Percivale and of Bors are full of interest, and with Launcelot, who, after more than a month spent in the company of Sir Percivale's dead sister, went at last "to play him by the waterside, for he was somewhat weary of the ship," we have a real if secret sympathy. Sir Melias also with Sir Ector and his brother Sir Gawaine give life to scenes that are too apt to be monotonous and dull.

On the whole, then, Caxton may fairly claim our assent to his view, for devoid of moral purpose as much of the book certainly is, it yet does put before us "noble chivalry, courtesy, humanity, friendliness, hardiness, love, friendship, cowardice, murder, hate, virtue, and sin" in such a guise as to encourage the reader "to do after the good and leave the evil, and



so to attain to good fame and renomme." The unsoundness of Ascham's criticism is proved indeed by the authors who are indebted to Malory. Spenser, Milton, and Tennyson are names which amply show that the book contained more than the "open manslaughter and bold bawdrie" which Ascham found there. To these names too may we not add that of Bunyan, to whom the romance was probably familiar through the reprinted edition of 1634? There is much in the *Pilgrim's Progress* that may well have been suggested by the Quest, and the lions guarding the entrance to the Palace Beautiful appear to have been directly borrowed from the lions before the castle of Carbonek (p. 90). One cannot take leave of Ascham without reminding the reader of a similar denunciation put by Scott into the mouth of the Roundhead soldier at Woodstock. "'But here,' he said, dealing a perilous thump on the volume—'Here is the king and high priest of these vices and follies! Here is he whom men of folly profanely call nature's miracle! Here is he whom princes chose for their cabinet-keeper, and whom maids of honour take for their bed-fellow! Here is the prime teacher of fine words, foppery, and folly. Here '—(dealing another perilous thump on the volume, and . . . it was the first folio . . . it was the *editio princeps*)—'On thee' he continued, 'on thee, William Shakspeare, I charge whate'er of such lawless idleness and immodest folly hath defiled the land since thy day.'"

Sir Thomas  
Malory.

Much has been said of the *Morte d'Arthur*, but nothing so far has been said of the author, if we may give him that title, of Malory himself. Unfortunately

there is not much to be said, indeed we know no more of him than he himself tells us at the close of the book. He spells his own name Maleore, while Caxton spells it Malory or Malorye; he was a knight and he finished his book in 1469 or 1470. The rhyming couplet which closes the work gives no sufficient ground for supposing, as some have done, that he was a priest, and his identification with a Yorkshire family of the same name is entirely a matter of conjecture. Bale, in his *Illustrium Majoris Britanniae Scriptorum* (1548), connects him with *Mailoria, in finibus Cambriae regio, Devae flumini vicina*, and quotes Leland as his authority; but Leland's *Commentarii de Scriptoribus Britannicis*, the MS. of which was used by Bale, contains no mention of Malory (*O.S.* III. 335). Some light, however, appears to have been thrown on the subject by Mr. T. W. Williams, who, in a letter to the *Athenaeum* (July 11th, 1896), quotes from the Report of the Historical MSS. Commissions on the MSS. of Wells Cathedral (p. 183), an account of a pardon by Edward IV. (Aug. 24, Anno regni 8), in which *Thomas Malorie miles* is, among others, expressly excepted from its benefit. (See also a subsequent letter in the issue of July 18.) Mr. Williams suggests that Malory then fled over-seas, and that he may have 'delivered' his 'copy' to Caxton at Bruges. This identification cannot as yet be accepted as conclusive, though it furnishes a clue which may lead to further discoveries. At present, therefore, the personality of Malory must be regarded as completely unknown. To us he is but the hidden showman pulling the strings which make his marionnettes go through their performance on their mimic stage. He is not even the

author of their play, nor are the marionnettes of his own making. But somewhere he found a box of puppets with dresses still fresh and bright though of a bygone age. In this box he found, too, books in a foreign tongue of various scenes in which the puppets had been made to act. He took these scenes and from them formed a grand new piece with the *motif* of a tragedy. The old action and incidents were retained, but the dialogue he wrote afresh in the finest English of his time, in English so vigorous and fresh that, though the marionnettes appear in the same dress and go through the same performance as when the original showman first put them on the stage, it is Malory's show and his alone which all the world must go and see.

## PREFACE OF WILLIAM CAXTON.

AFTER that I had accomplished and finished divers histories, as well of contemplation as of other historial and worldly acts of great conquerors and princes, and also certain books of ensamples and doctrine, many noble and divers gentlemen of this realm of England came and demanded me many and oftentimes, wherefore that I have not do made and imprint the noble history of the Saint Greal, and of the most renowned Christian king, first and chief of the three best Christian and worthy, king Arthur, which ought most to be remembered amongst us English- 10 men tofore all other Christian kings, for it is notoriously known through the universal world, that there be nune worthy and the best that ever were, that is to wit, three Paynims, three Jews, and three Christian men. As for the Paynims, they were tofore the Incarnation of Christ, which were named, the first Hector of Troy, of whom the history is comen both in ballad and in prose, the second Alexander the Great, and the third Julius Cæsar, Emperor of Rome, of whom the histories be well known and had. And as for the three Jews, which also were 20 tofore the incarnation of our Lord, of whom the first was duke Joshua which brought the children of Israel into the land of behest, the second David king of Jerusalem, and the third Judas Machabeus. Of these three the Bible rehearseth all their noble histories and acts. And since

the said incarnation have been three noble Christian men, stalled and admitted through the universal world into the number of the nine best and worthy. Of whom was first the noble Arthur, whose noble acts I purpose to write in this present book here following. The second was Charlemain, or Charles the Great, of whom the history is had in many places, both in French and in English. And the third and last was Godfrey of Boloine, of whose acts and life I made a book unto the excellent prince and

10 king of noble memory, king Edward the Fourth. The said noble gentlemen instantly required me to imprint the history of the said noble king and conqueror king Arthur, and of his knights, with the history of the Saint Greal, and of the death and ending of the said Arthur; affirming that I ought rather to imprint his acts and noble feats, than of Godfrey of Boloine, or any of the other eight, considering that he was a man born within this realm, and king and emperor of the same: and that there be in French divers and many noble volumes of

20 his acts, and also of his knights. To whom I answered that divers men hold opinion that there was no such Arthur, and that all such books as been made of him, be but feigned and fables, because that some chronicles make of him no mention, nor remember him nothing, nor of his knights. Whereto they answered, and one in special said, that in him that should say or think that there was never such a king called Arthur, might well be aretted great folly and blindness. For he said that there were many evidences of the contrary. First ye may see his

30 sepulchre in the monastery of Glastingbury. And also in Poliericon, in the fifth book the sixth chapter, and in the seventh book the twenty-third chapter, where his body was buried, and after found, and translated into the said monastery. Ye shall see also in the history of Bochas in his book *De Casu Principum* part of his noble acts, and also of his fall. Also Galfridus in his British book re-

counteth his life: and in divers places of England many remembrances be yet of him, and shall remain perpetually, and also of his knights. First in the abbey of Westminster, at St. Edward's shrine, remaineth the print of his seal in red wax closed in beryl, in which is written, *Patricius Arthurus Britannie, Gallie, Germanie, Dacie, Imperator*. Item in the castle of Dover ye may see Gawaine's scull, and Cradok's mantle. at Winchester the Round Table: in other places Launcelot's sword and many other things. Then all these things considered, there can no 10 man reasonably gainsay but that there was a king of this land named Arthur. For in all places, Christian and heathen, he is reputed and taken for one of the nine worthy, and the first of the three Christian men. And also, he is more spoken of beyond the sea, more books made of his noble acts, than there be in England, as well in Dutch, Italian, Spanish, and Greekish, as in French. And yet of record remain in witness of him in Wales, in the town of Camelot, the great stones and the marvellous works of iron lying under the ground, and royal 20 vaults, which divers now living have seen. Wherefore it is a marvel why he is no more renowned in his own country, save only it accordeth to the Word of God, which saith that no man is accepted for a prophet in his own country. Then all these things aforesaid alleged, I could not well deny but that there was such a noble king named Arthur, and reputed one of the nine worthy, and first and chief of the Christian men. And many noble volumes be made of him and of his noble knights in French, which I have seen and read beyond the sea, 30 which be not had in our maternal tongue. But in Welsh be many and also in French, and some in English, but no where nigh all. Wherefore, such as have late been drawn out briefly into English I have after the simple conning that God hath sent to me, under the favour and correction of all noble lords and gentlemen, enprised to imprint a

book of the noble histories of the said king Arthur, and of certain of his knights, after a copy unto me delivered, which copy Sir Thomas Malorye did take out of certain books of French, and reduced it into English. And I, according to my copy, have down set it in print, to the intent that noble men may see and learn the noble acts of chivalry, the gentle and virtuous deeds that some knights used in those days, by which they came to honour, and how they that were vicious were punished and oft  
10 put to shame and rebuke; humbly beseeching all noble lords and ladies, with all other estates of what estate or degree they been of, that shall see and read in this said book and work, that they take the good and honest acts in their remembrance, and to follow the same. Wherein they shall find many joyous and pleasant histories, and noble and renowned acts of humanity, gentleness, and chivalry. For herein may be seen noble chivalry, courtesy, humanity, friendliness, hardiness, love, friendship, cowardice, murder, hate, virtue, and sin. Do after the good and leave  
20 the evil, and it shall bring you to good fame and renommee. And for to pass the time this book shall be pleasant to read in, but for to give faith and belief that all is true that is contained herein, ye be at your liberty: but all is written for our doctrine, and for to beware that we fall not to vice nor sin, but to exercise and follow virtue, by the which we may come and attain to good fame and renown in this life, and after this short and transitory life to come unto everlasting bliss in heaven; the which He grant us that reigneth in heaven, the blessed Trinity.  
30 Amen.

THE BOOK OF  
KING ARTHUR  
AND OF HIS NOBLE  
KNIGHTS OF THE ROUND TABLE





# PART I.

## KING ARTHUR.

### CHAPTER I.

*Of the birth of King Arthur, and how he was chosen king.*

It befell in the days of Uther Pendragon, when he was king of all England, and so reigned, that there was a mighty duke in Cornwall that held war against him long time. And the duke was named the duke of Tintagil. And so by means king Uther sent for this duke, charging him to bring his wife with him, for she was called a fair lady, and a passing wise, and her name was called Igraine. And the messengers had their answers, and that was this, shortly, that neither he nor his wife would not come at him. Then was the king wonderly wroth. And then 10 the king sent him plain word again, and bade him be ready and stuff him and garnish him, for within forty days he would fetch him out of the biggest castle that he hath. When the duke had this warning, anon he went and furnished and garnished two strong castles of his, of the which the one hight Tintagil and the other castle hight Terrabil. So his wife, dame Igraine, he put in the castle of Tintagil, and himself he put in the castle of Terrabil, the which had many issues and posterns out. Then in all haste came Uther with a great host, and laid 20

*Uther  
and  
Igraine*

a siege about the castle of Terrabil. And there he pight many pavilions, and there was great war made on both parties, and much people slain.

But the duke of Tintagil espied how the king rode from the siege of Terrabil, and therefore that night he issued out of the castle at a postern, for to have distressed the king's host. And so, through his own issue, the duke himself was slain or ever the king came at the castle of Tintagil. Then all the barons by one assent prayed the king  
10 of accord between the lady Igraine and him. The king gave them leave, for fain would he have been accorded with her. So the king put all the trust in Ulfius to entreat between them; so, by the entreat, at the last the king and she met together. Now will we do well, said Ulfius. our king is a lusty knight and wifeless, and my lady Igraine is a passing fair lady; it were great joy unto us all and it might please the king to make her his queen. Unto that they were all well accorded, and moved it to the king. and anon, like a lusty knight, he assented thereto  
20 with good will, and so in all haste they were married in a morning with great mirth and joy.

*Birth of  
Arthur.*

Then the time came that the queen Igraine should bear a child. Then came Merlin unto the king and said, Sir, ye must purvey you for the nourishing of your child. As thou wilt, said the king, be it. Well, said Merlin, I know a lord of yours in this land, that is a passing true man and a faithful, and he shall have the nourishing of your child, and his name is Sir Ector, and he is a lord of fair livelihood in many parts in England and Wales. And  
30 this lord, Sir Ector, let him be sent for, for to come and speak with you; and desire him yourself, as he loveth you, that he will put his own child to nourishing to another woman, and that his wife nourish yours. And when the child is born let it be delivered unto me at yonder privy postern unchristened. So like as Merlin devised it was done. And when Sir Ector was come he

made affiance to the king for to nourish the child like as the king desired ; and there the king granted Sir Ector great rewards. Then when the lady was delivered, the king commanded two knights and two ladies to take the child bound in a cloth of gold, and that ye deliver him to what poor man ye meet at the postern gate of the castle. So the child was delivered unto Merlin, and so he bare it forth unto Sir Ector, and made an holy man to christen him, and named him Arthur : and so Sir Ector's wife nourished him with her own breast.

10

Then within two years king Uther fell sick of a great malady. And in the meanwhile his enemies usurped upon him, and did a great battle upon his men, and slew many of his people. Sir, said Merlin, ye may not lie so as ye do, for ye must to the field, though ye ride on an horse-litter ; for ye shall never have the better of your enemies but if your person be there, and then shall ye have the victory. So it was done as Merlin had devised, and they carried the king forth in a horse-litter with a great host towards his enemies. And at St. Albans there met with 20 the king a great host of the North. And that day Sir Ulfius and Sir Brastias did great deeds of arms, and king Uther's men overcame the Northern battle, and slew many people, and put the remnant to flight. And then the king returned unto London, and made great joy of his victory. And then he fell passing sore sick, so that three days and three nights he was speechless ; wherefore all the barons made great sorrow, and asked Merlin what counsel were best. There is none other remedy, said Merlin, but God will have his will. But look ye all barons be 30 before king Uther to-morn, and God and I shall make him to speak. So on the morn all the barons with Merlin came tofore the king : then Merlin said aloud unto king Uther, Sir, shall your son Arthur be king after your days, of this realm, with all the appurtenance ? Then Uther Pendragon turned him and said in hearing of them all,

*Death  
of Uther*

I give him God's blessing and mine, and bid him pray for my soul, and righteously and worshipfully that he claim the crown upon forfeiture of my blessing. And therewith he yielded up the ghost. And then was he interred as longed to a king. Wherefore the queen, fair Igraine, made great sorrow and all the barons. Then stood the realm in great jeopardy long while, for every lord that was mighty of men made him strong, and many wend to have been king.

*The Wonder of the Sword.*

10 Then Merlin went to the archbishop of Canterbury, and counselled him for to send for all the lords of the realm, and all the gentlemen of arms, that they should to London come by Christmas upon pain of cursing: and for this cause—that Jesus, that was born on that night, that He would of his great mercy shew some miracle, as He was come to be king of mankind, for to shew some miracle who should be rightwise king of this realm. So the archbishop by the advice of Merlin sent for all the lords and gentlemen of arms, that they should come by  
20 Christmas even unto London. And many of them made them clean of their life, that their prayer might be the more acceptable unto God.

So in the greatest church of London (whether it were Paul's or not, the French book maketh no mention) all the estates were long or day in the church for to pray. And when matins and the first mass was done, there was seen in the churchyard against the high altar a great stone four square, like unto a marble stone, and in the midst thereof was like an anvil of steel a foot on high,  
30 and therein stack a fair sword naked by the point, and letters there were written in gold about the sword that said thus: Whoso pulleth out this sword of this stone and anvil is rightwise king born of all England. Then the people marvelled, and told it to the archbishop. I command, said the archbishop, that ye keep you within your church, and pray unto God still; that no man touch the

sword till the high mass be all done. So when all masses were done all the lords went to behold the stone and the sword. And when they saw the scripture, some assayed—such as would have been king. But none might stir the sword nor move it. He is not here, said the archbishop, that shall achieve the sword, but doubt not God will make him known. But this is my counsel, said the archbishop, that we let purvey ten knights, men of good fame, and they to keep this sword. So it was ordained, and then there was made a cry, that every man 10 should assay that would, for to win the sword. And upon New Year's Day the barons let make a justs and a tournament, that all knights that would just or tourney there might play: and all this was ordained for to keep the lords together and the commons, for the archbishop trusted that God would make him known that should win the sword.

So upon New Year's Day when the service was done the barons rode to the field, some to just, and some to tourney; and so it happened that Sir Ector, that had great 20 livelihood about London, rode unto the justs, and with him rode Sir Kay his son and young Arthur that was his nourished brother, and Sir Kay was made knight at Allhallowmas afore. So as they rode to the justs-ward Sir Kay had lost his sword, for he had left it at his father's lodging, and so he prayed young Arthur to ride for his sword. I will well, said Arthur, and rode fast after the sword; and when he came home the lady and all were out to see the justing. Then was Arthur wroth, and said to himself, I will ride to the churchyard and 30 take the sword with me that sticketh in the stone, for my brother Sir Kay shall not be without a sword this day.

*Arthur  
pulls out  
the sword,*

So when he came to the churchyard Sir Arthur alighted, and tied his horse to the stile, and so he went to the tent, and found no knights there, for they were at the justing; and so he handled the sword by the handles, and

lightly and fiercely pulled it out of the stone, and took his horse and rode his way till he came to his brother Sir Kay, and delivered him the sword. And as soon as Sir Kay saw the sword he wist well it was the sword of the stone, and so he rode to his father Sir Ector, and said : Sir, lo here is the sword of the stone ; wherefore I must be king of this land. When Sir Ector beheld the sword he returned again and came to the church, and there they alighted all three and went into the church, and anon he made Sir Kay  
10 to swear upon a book how he came to that sword. Sir, said Sir Kay, by my brother Arthur, for he brought it to me. How gat ye this sword ? said Sir Ector to Arthur. Sir, I will tell you : when I came home for my brother's sword, I found nobody at home to deliver me his sword, and so I thought my brother Sir Kay should not be swordless, and so I came hither eagerly and pulled it out of the stone without any pain. Found ye any knights about this sword ? said Sir Ector. Nay, said Arthur. Now, said Sir Ector to Arthur, I understand ye must be king of this  
20 land. Wherefore I, said Arthur, and for what cause ? Sir, said Ector, for God will have it so : for there should never man have drawn out this sword but he that shall be right-wise king of this land. Now let me see whether ye can put the sword there as it was, and pull it out again. That is no mastery, said Arthur : and so he put it into the stone. Therewith Sir Ector assayed to pull out the sword and failed.

Now assay, said Sir Ector to Sir Kay. And anon he pulled at the sword with all his might, but it would not be.  
30 Now shall ye assay, said Sir Ector to Arthur. I will well, said Arthur, and pulled it out easily. And therewithal Sir Ector kneeled down to the earth, and Sir Kay. Alas, said Arthur, mine own dear father and brother, why kneel ye to me. Nay, nay, my lord Arthur, it is not so : I was never your father nor of your blood, but I wote well ye are of an higher blood than I wend ye were. And then Sir

Ector told him all, how he was betaken him for to nourish him, and by whose commandment, and by Merlin's deliverance. Then Arthur made great dole when he understood that Sir Ector was not his father. Sir, said Ector unto Arthur, will ye be my good and gracious lord when ye are king? Else were I to blame, said Arthur, for ye are the man in the world that I am most beholding to, and my good lady and mother your wife, that as well as her own hath fostered me and kept. And if ever it be God's will that I be king, as ye say, ye shall desire of me what I may do, and I shall not fail you : God forbid I should fail you. Sir, said Sir Ector, I will ask no more of you but that you will make my son, your foster-brother Sir Kay, seneschal of all your lands. That shall be done, said Arthur, and more by the faith of my body, that never man shall have that office but he, while he and I live. Therewithal they went, unto the archbishop, and told him how the sword was achieved, and by whom.

And on Twelfth Day all the barons came thither, and to assay to take the sword who that would assay. 10 But there afore them all there might none take it out but Arthur, wherefore there were many lords wroth, and said it was great shame unto them all and the realm, to be over governed with a boy of no high blood born. And so they fell out at that time that it was put off till Candlemas, and then all the barons should meet there again. But always the ten knights were ordained to watch the sword day and night, and so they set a pavilion over the stone and the sword, and five always watched. So at Candlemas many more great lords came thither for to have won the sword, 30 but there might none prevail. And right as Arthur did at Christmas he did at Candlemas, and pulled out the sword easily, whereof the barons were sore aggrieved, and put it off in delay till the high feast of Easter. And as Arthur sped afore, so did he at Easter : yet there were some of the great lords had indignation that Arthur should be their



king, and put it off in a delay till the feast of Pentecost. Then the archbishop of Canterbury by Merlin's providence let purvey them of the best knights that they might get, and such knights as king Uther Pendragon loved best and most trusted in his days, and such knights were put about Arthur, as Sir Baudwin of Britain, Sir Kay, Sir Ulfius, Sir Brastias. All these, with many other, were always about Arthur, day and night, till the feast of Pentecost.

*and i'  
chosen  
king.*

And at the feast of Pentecost all manner of men assayed 10 to pull at the sword that would assay, but none might prevail but Arthur; and he pulled it out afore all the lords and commons that were there, wherefore all the commons cried at once, We will have Arthur unto our king; we will put him no more in delay, for we all see that it is God's will that he shall be our king, and who that holdeth against it we will slay him. And therewithal they kneeled down all at once, both rich and poor, and cried Arthur mercy, because they had delayed him so long. And Arthur forgave them, and took the sword between both his 20 hands, and offered it upon the altar where the archbishop was, and so was he made knight of the best man that was there. And so anon was the coronation made, and there was he sworn unto his lords and the commons for to be a true king, to stand with true justice from thenceforth the days of this life. Also then he made all lords that held of the crown to come in, and to do service as they ought to do. And many complaints were made unto Sir Arthur of great wrongs that were done since the death of king Uther, of many lands that were bereaved lords, knights, ladies, and 30 gentlemen. Wherefore king Arthur made the lands to be given again unto them that owned them. When this was done that the king had stablished all the countries about London, then he let make Sir Kay seneschal of England; and Sir Baudwin of Britain was made constable; and Sir Ulfius was made chamberlain; and Sir Brastias was made warden to wait upon the north from Trent forwards, for it

was that time, for the most part, the king's enemies'. But within few years after, Arthur won all the north, Scotland, and all that were under their obeisance. Also Wales, a part of it held against Arthur, but he overcame them all as he did the remnant through the noble prowess of himself and his knights of the Round Table.

## CHAPTER II.

*Of Griflet, and of the knight at the fountain, and how Arthur got Excalibur his sword.*

Then the king removed into Wales, and let cry a great feast, that it should be holden at Pentecost, after the in-coronation of him at the city of Carlion.

Then on a day there came into the court a squire on 10 horseback, leading a knight before him wounded to the death, and told him how there was a knight in the forest had reared up a pavilion by a well, and hath slain my master, a good knight, his name was Miles; wherefore I beseech you that my master may be buried, and that some knight may revenge my master's death. Then the noise was great of that knight's death in the court, and every man said his advice: then came Griflet that was but a squire, and he was but young, of the age of king Arthur; so he besought the king for all his service that he had done him to 20 give him the order of knighthood.

Thou art full young and tender of age, said Arthur, for to take so high an order on thee. Sir, said Griflet, I beseech you make me knight. Sir, said Merlin, it were great pity to lose Griflet, for he will be a passing good man when he is of age, abiding with you the term of his life. And if he adventure his body with yonder knight at the fountain it is in great peril if ever he come again, for he is one of the best knights of the world, and the

strongest man of arms. Well, said king Arthur. So at the desire of Griflet the king made him knight. Now, said Arthur unto Sir Griflet, since I have made you knight, thou must give me a gift. What ye will, said Griflet. Thou shalt promise me by the faith of thy body, when thou hast justed with the knight at the fountain, whether it fall ye be on foot or on horseback, that right so ye shall come again unto me without making any more debate. I will promise you, said Griflet, as you desire.

- 10 Then took Griflet his horse in great haste, and dressed his shield, and took a spear in his hand, and so he rode a great wallop till he came to the fountain, and thereby he saw a rich pavilion, and thereby under a cloth stood a fair horse well-saddled and bridled, and on a tree a shield of divers colours, and a great spear. Then Griflet smote on the shield with the butt of his spear that the shield fell down to the ground. With that the knight came out of the pavilion and said, Fair knight, why smote ye down my shield? For I will just with you, said Griflet. It is  
20 better ye do not, said the knight, for ye are but young, and late made knight, and your might is nothing to mine. As for that, said Griflet, I will just with you. That is me loth, said the knight, but since I must needs I will dress me thereto: of whence be ye? said the knight. Sir, I am of Arthur's court. So the two knights ran together, that Griflet's spear all to-shivered, and therewithal he smote Griflet through the shield and the left side, and brake the spear, that the truncheon stuck in his body, that horse and knight fell down.

- 30 When the knight saw him lie so on the ground he alighted, and was passing heavy, for he wend he had slain him, and then he unlaced his helm and gat him wind, and so with the truncheon he set him on his horse and gat him wind, and so betook him to God, and said he had a mighty heart, and if he might live he would prove a passing good knight. And so Sir Griflet rode to the

court, where great dole was made for him. But through good leeches he was healed and saved. And the king was passingly wroth for the hurt of Sir Griflet. And so he commanded a privyman of his chamber, that or it be day his best horse and armour, with all that belongeth unto his person, be without the city or to-morrow day. Right so, or to-morrow day, he met with his man and his horse, and so mounted up, and dressed his shield, and took his spear, and bade his chamberlain tarry there till he came again.

10

*Arthur is  
overcome  
by the  
knight at  
the foun-  
tain,*

And so Arthur rode a soft pace till it was day, and then was he aware of three churls chasing Merlin, and would have slain him. Then the king rode unto them and bade them, Flee churls! Then were they afraid when they saw a knight, and fled. O Merlin, said Arthur, here haddest thou been slain, for all thy crafts. had I not been. Nay, said Merlin, not so, for I could save myself an I would, and thou art more near thy death than I am, for thou goest to the death-ward, and God be not thy friend. So as they went thus talking they came to the 20 fountain, and the rich pavilion there by it. Then king Arthur was ware where sat a knight armed in a chair. Sir knight, said Arthur, for what cause abidest thou here, that there may no knight ride this way but if he just with thee, said the king: I rede thee leave that custom, said Arthur. This custom, said the knight, have I used and will use maugre who saith nay; and who is grieved with my custom let him amend it that will. I will amend it, said Arthur. I shall defend thee, said the knight.

30

Anon he took his horse, and dressed his shield, and took a spear, and they met so hard either in other's shields that they all to-shivered their spears. Therewith Arthur anon pulled out his sword. Nay, not so, said the knight, it is fairer that we twain run more together with sharp spears. I will well, said Arthur, and I had any

more spears. I have enow, said the knight. So there came a squire, and brought two good spears, and Arthur chose one and he another, so they spurred their horses, and came together with all their mights, that either brake their spears to their hands. Then Arthur set hand on his sword. Nay, said the knight, ye shall do better; ye are a passing good juster as ever I met withal, and once for the love of the high order of knighthood let us just once again. I assent me, said Arthur.

- 10 Anon there were brought two great spears, and every knight gat a spear, and therewith they ran together that Arthur's spear all to-shivered. But the other knight hit him so hard in midst of the shield that horse and man fell to the earth, and therewith Arthur was eager, and pulled out his sword, and said, I will assay thee, Sir knight, on foot, for I have lost the honour on horseback. I will be on horseback, said the knight. Then was Arthur wroth, and dressed his shield towards him with his sword drawn. When the knight saw that, he alight, for him thought no  
20 worship to have a knight at such avail, he to be on horseback, and he on foot, and so he alight and dressed his shield unto Arthur. And there began a strong battle with many great strokes, and so hewed with their swords that the cantels flew in the fields, and much blood they bled both, that all the place there as they fought was overbled with blood, and thus they fought long, and rested them; and then they went to the battle again, and so hurtled together like two rams that either fell to the earth. So at the last they smote together, that both  
20 their swords met even together. But the sword of the knight smote king Arthur's sword in two pieces, wherefore he was heavy.

Then said the knight unto Arthur, Thou art in my danger whether me list to save thee or slay thee, and but thou yield thee as overcome and recreant thou shalt die. As for death, said king Arthur, welcome be it when it

cometh; but to yield me unto thee as recreant I had lever die than to be so shamed. And therewithal the king leapt unto Pellinore, and took him by the middle, and threw him down, and rased off his helmet. When the knight felt that he was adread, for he was a passing big man of might, and anon he brought Arthur under him, and rased off his helm, and would have smitten off his head.

Therewithal came Merlin, and said, Knight, hold thy hand, for and thou slay that knight thou putttest this 10 *but is saved by Merlin.* realm in the greatest damage that ever was realm: for this knight is a man of more worship than thou wotest of. Why, who is he? said the knight. It is king Arthur. Then would he have slain him for dread o<sup>f</sup> his wrath, and heaved up his sword, and therewith Merlin cast an enchantment to the knight, that he fell to the earth in a great sleep. Then Merlin took up king Arthur, and rode forth on the knight's horse. Alas, said Arthur, what hast thou done, Merlin? hast thou slain this good knight by thy crafts? There lived not so worshipful a knight as he 20 was; I had lever than the stint of my land a year that he were on live. Care ye not, said Merlin, for he is wholer than ye, for he is but on sleep, and will awake within three hours. I told you, said Merlin, what a knight he was; here had ye be slain had I not been. Also there liveth not a bigger knight than he is one, and he shall hereafter do you right good service, and his name is Pellinore, and he shall have two sons that shall be passing good men; save one, they shall have no fellow of prowess and of good living; and their names shall be Percivale of 30 Wales and Lamerake of Wales: and he shall tell you the name of your sister's son that shall be the destruction of all this realm.

Right so the king and he departed, and went until an hermit that was a good man and a great leach. So the hermit searched all his wounds and gave him good salves;

*Arthur gets  
Excalibur.*

so the king was there three days, and then were his wounds well amended that he might ride and go, and so departed. And as they rode, Arthur said, I have no sword. No force, said Merlin, hereby is a sword that shall be yours and I may. So they rode till they came to a lake, the which was a fair water and broad, and in the midst of the lake Arthur was ware of an arm clothed in white samite, that held a fair sword in that hand. Lo, said Merlin, yonder is that sword that I spake of. With  
10 that they saw a damsel going upon the lake: What damsel is that? said Arthur. That is the Lady of the lake, said Merlin, and within that lake is a rock, and therein is as fair a place as any on earth, and richly beseen, and this damsel will come to you anon, and then speak ye fair to her that she will give you that sword. Anon withal came the damsel unto Arthur and saluted him, and he her again. Damsel, said Arthur, what sword is that, that yonder the arm holdeth above the water? I would it were mine, for I have no sword. Sir Arthur,  
20 king, said the damsel, that sword is mine, and if ye will give me a gift when I ask it you, ye shall have it. By my faith, said Arthur, I will give you what gift ye will ask. Well, said the damsel, go ye into yonder barge and row yourself to the sword, and take it and the scabbard with you, and I will ask my gift when I see my time. So Sir Arthur and Merlin alight, and tied their horses to two trees, and so they went into the ship, and when they came to the sword that the hand held, Sir Arthur took it up by the handles, and took it with him. And the arm  
30 and the hand went under the water; and so they came unto the land and rode forth.

And then Sir Arthur saw a rich pavilion: What signifieth yonder pavilion? It is the knight's pavilion, said Merlin, that ye fought with last, Sir Pellinore, but he is out, he is not there; he hath ado with a knight of yours, that hight Egglame, and they have fought to-

gether, but at the last Egglame fled, and else he had been dead, and he hath chased him even to Carlion, and we shall meet with him anon in the high way. That is well said, said Arthur, now have I a sword, now will I wage battle with him and be avenged on him. Sir, ye shall not so, said Merlin, for the knight is weary of fighting and chasing, so that ye shall have no worship to have ado with him; also he will not lightly be matched of one knight living; and therefore it is my counsel, let him pass, for he shall do you good service in short time, 10 and his sons after his days. Also ye shall see that day in short space, ye shall be right glad to give him your sister to wed. When I see him, I will do as ye advise me, said Arthur. Then Sir Arthur looked on the sword, and liked it passing well. Whether liketh you better, said Merlin, the sword or the scabbard? Me liketh better the sword, said Arthur. Ye are more unwise, said Merlin, for the scabbard is worth ten of the sword, for while ye have the scabbard upon you ye shall never lose no blood, be ye never so sore wounded, therefore keep well the scabbard 20 always with you. So they rode unto Carlion, and by the way they met with Sir Pellinore; but Merlin had done such a craft that Pellinore saw not Arthur, and he passed by without any words. I marvel, said Arthur, that the knight would not speak. Sir, said Merlin, he saw you not, for and he had seen you ye had not lightly departed. So they came unto Carlion, whereof his knights were passing glad. And when they heard of his adventures they marvelled that he would jeopard his person so alone. But all men of worship said it was merry to be under 30 such a chieftain that would put his person in adventure as other poor knights did.



## CHAPTER III.

*How king Arthur wedded Guenever, with whom he had  
the Round Table.*

In the beginning of Arthur, after he was chosen king by adventure and by grace,—for the most part of the barons knew not that he was Uther Pendragon's son, but as Merlin made it openly known,—many kings and lords made great war against him for that cause; but well Arthur overcame them all; for the most part of the days of his life he was ruled much by the counsel of Merlin. So it fell on a time king Arthur said unto Merlin, My barons will let me have no rest, but needs I must take a  
10 wife, and I will none take but by thy counsel and by thine advice. It is well done, said Merlin, that ye take a wife, for a man of your bounty and nobleness should not be without a wife. Now is there any that ye love more than another? Yea, said king Arthur, I love Guenever, the daughter of king Leodegrance, of the land of Cameliard, which Leodegrance holdeth in his house the Table Round, that ye told he had of my father, Uther. And this damsel is the most valiant and fairest lady that I know living, or yet that ever I could find. Sir, said  
20 Merlin, as of her beauty and fairness she is one of the fairest on live. But and ye loved her not so well as ye do, I could find you a damsel of beauty and of goodness that should like you and please you, and your heart were not set; but there as a man's heart is set, he will be loth to return. That is truth, said king Arthur.

Then Merlin desired of the king to have men with him that should enquire of Guenever, and so the king granted him. And Merlin went forth to king Leodegrance of Cameliard, and told him of the desire of the king that  
30 he would have unto his wife Guenever his daughter. That is to me, said king Leodegrance, the best tidings that ever

I heard, that so worthy a king of prowess and noblesse will wed my daughter. And as for my lands I will give him, wist I it might please him, but he hath lands enough, him needeth none, but I shall send him a gift shall please him much more, for I shall give him the Table Round, the which Uther Pendragon gave me, and when it is full complete there is an hundred knights and fifty. And as for an hundred good knights I have myself, but I lack fifty, for so many have been slain in my days. And so king Leodegrance delivered his daughter Guenever unto 10 Merlin, and the Table Round, with the hundred knights, and so they rode freshly, with great royalty, what by water and what by land, till that they came nigh unto London.

When king Arthur heard of the coming of Guenever and the hundred knights with the Table Round, then king Arthur made great joy for their coming, and that rich present, and said openly, This fair lady is passing welcome unto me, for I have loved her long, and therefore there is nothing so lief to me. And these knights 20 with the Round Table please me more than right great riches. And in all haste the king let ordain for the marriage and the coronation in the most honourablest wise that could be devised. Now Merlin, said king Arthur, go thou and espy me in all this land fifty knights which be of most prowess and worship. Within short time Merlin had found such knights that should fulfil twenty and eight knights, but no more he could find. Then the bishop of Canterbury was fetched, and he blessed the sieges with great royalty and devotion, and there set the eight and 30 twenty knights in their sieges. And when this was done Merlin said, Fair sirs, ye must all arise and come to king Arthur for to do him homage; he will have the better will to maintain you. And so they arose and did their homage. And when they were gone Merlin found in every siege letters of gold that told the knights' names that had

sitten therein. But two sieges were void. And so anon came young Gawaine, and asked the king a gift. Ask, said the king, and I shall grant it you. Sir, I ask that ye will make me knight that same day ye shall wed fair Guenever. I will do it with a good will, said king Arthur, and do unto you all the worship that I may, for I must by reason you are my nephew, my sister's son. Then was the high feast made ready, and the king was wedded at Camelot unto Dame Guenever in the church of Saint  
10 Stephen's, with great solemnity.

Then the king stablished all his knights, and them that were of lands not rich he gave them lands, and charged them never to do outrage, nor murder, and always to flee treason. Also, by no mean to be cruel, but to give mercy unto him that asketh mercy, upon pain of forfeiture of their worship and lordship of king Arthur for evermore; and alway to do ladies, damsels, and gentlewomen succour upon pain of death. Also, that no man take no battles in a wrongful quarrel for no law, nor for world's goods,  
20 Unto this were all the knights sworn of the Table Round, both old and young. And every year were they sworn at the high feast of Pentecost.

#### CHAPTER IV.

*How king Arthur, king Uriens, and Sir Accolon of Gaul  
chased an hart, and of their marvellous adventures.*

Then it befel that Arthur and many of his knights rode on hunting into a great forest, and it happed king Arthur, king Uriens, and Sir Accolon of Gaul followed a great hart, for they three were well horsed, and so they chased so fast that within awhile they three were then ten mile from their fellowship. And at the last they clased so sore that they slew their horses underneath them.

Then were they all three on foot, and ever they saw the hart afore them passing weary and enbushed. What will ye do? said king Arthur, we are hard bested. Let us go on foot, said king Uriens, till we may meet with some lodging. Then were they ware of the hart that lay on a great water bank, and a brachet biting on his throat, and more other hounds came after. Then king Arthur blew the prise and dight the hart. Then the king looked about the world, and saw afore him in a great water a little ship, all apparelled with silk down to the water, and the 10 ship came right unto them, and landed on the sands. Then Arthur went to the bank and looked in, and saw none earthly creature therein. Sirs, said the king, come thence, and let us see what is in this ship. So they went in all three, and found it richly behanged with cloth of silk. By then it was dark night, and there suddenly were about them an hundred torches set upon all the sides of the ship boards, and it gave great light; and therewithal there came out twelve fair damsels and saluted king Arthur on their knees, and called him by his name, 20 and said he was right welcome, and such cheer as they had he should have of the best. The king thanked them fair

Therewithal they led the king and his two fellows into a fair chamber, and there was a cloth laid richly beseen of all that longed unto a table, and there were they served of all wines and meats that they could think; of that the king had great marvel, for he fared never better in his life as for one supper. And so when they had supped at their leisure, king Arthur was led into a 30 chamber, a richer beseen chamber saw he never none; and so was king Uriens served, and led into such another chamber; and Sir Accolon was led into the third chamber, passing richly and well beseen: and so were they laid in their beds easily. And anon they fell on sleep, and slept marvellously sore all that night. And on the morrow king

Uriens was in Camelot with his wife, Morgan le Fay. And when he awoke he had great marvel how he came there, for on the even afore he was two days' journey from Camelot. And when king Arthur awoke he found himself in a dark prison, hearing about him many complaints of woful knights.

*Arthur  
consents to  
fight for  
Sir Damas*

What are ye that so complain? said king Arthur. We be here twenty knights prisoners, said they, and some of us have lain here seven year, and some more and some  
10 less. For what cause? said Arthur. We shall tell you, said the knights: This lord of this castle his name is Sir Damas, and he is the falsest knight that liveth, and full of treason, and a very coward as any liveth, and he hath a younger brother, a good knight of prowess, his name is Sir Ontzlake, and this traitor Damas, the elder brother, will give him no part of his livelihood but as Sir Ontzlake keepeth through prowess of his hands, and so he keepeth from him a full fair manor and a rich, and therein Sir Ontzlake dwelleth worshipfully and is well beloved of all  
20 people. And this Sir Damas our master is as evil beloved, for he is without mercy, and he is a coward, and great war hath been betwixt them both, but Ontzlake hath ever the better, and ever he proffereth Sir Damas to fight for the livelihood, body for body; but, if he will not do it, to find a knight to fight for him. Unto that Sir Damas hath granted to find a knight, but he is so evil beloved and hated, that there is never a knight will fight for him. And when Damas saw this, that there was never a knight would fight for him, he hath daily lain await with many  
30 knights with him, and taken all the knights in this country to see and espy their adventures: he hath taken them by force and brought them to his prison. And so he took us severally as we rode on our adventures, and many good knights have died in this prison for hunger, to the number of eighteen knights: and if any of us all that here is or hath been, would have fought with his brother Ontzlake

he would have delivered us, but for because this Damas is so false and so full of treason, we would never fight for him to die for it. And we be so lean with hunger that hardly we may stand on our feet. God deliver you for his mercy, said Arthur.

Anon therewithal there came a damsel unto Arthur, and asked him, What cheer? I cannot say, said he. Sir, said she, and ye will fight for my lord, ye shall be delivered out of prison, and else ye escape never with life. Now, said Arthur, that is hard, yet had I lever 10 to fight with a knight than to die in prison: with this, said Arthur, that I may be delivered and all these prisoners, I will do the battle. Yes, said the damsel. I am ready, said Arthur, and I had horse and armour. Ye shall lack none, said the damsel. Me sêemeth, damsel, that I should have seen you in the court of Arthur. Nay, said the damsel, I came never there, I am the lord's daughter of this castle. Yet was she false, for she was one of the damsels of Morgan le Fay.

Anon she went unto Sir Damas, and told him how he 20 would do battle for him, and so he sent for Arthur. And when he came he was well coloured, and well made of his limbs, that all knights that saw him said it were pity that such a knight should die in prison. So Sir Damas and he were agreed that he should fight for him upon this covenant, that all other knights should be delivered; and unto that was Sir Damas sworn unto Arthur, and also to do the battle to the uttermost. And with that all the twenty knights were brought out of the dark prison into the hall and delivered. And so 30 they all abode to see the battle.

Now turn we unto Accolon of Gaul, that when he awoke he found himself by a deep well side, within half a foot, in great peril of death. And there came out of that fountain a pipe of silver, and out of that pipe ran water all on high in a stone of marble. When Sir Accolon saw

*Sir Accolon is  
champion  
for Sir  
Ontzlake.*

this he blessed him and said : Jesu save my lord king Arthur, and king Uriens, for these damsels in this ship have betrayed us. They were devils and no women, and if I may escape this misadventure, I shall destroy all where I may find these false damsels that use enchantments.

Right with that there came a dwarf with a great mouth and a flat nose, and saluted Sir Accolon, and said how he came from queen Morgan le Fay ; and she greeteth you well, and biddeth you be of strong heart, for ye shall  
10 fight to morn with a knight at the hour of prime, and therefore she hath sent you here Excalibur Arthur's sword, and the scabbard, and she biddeth you as ye love her, that ye do the battle to the uttermost without any mercy, like as ye had promised her when ye spake together in private : and 'what damsel that bringeth her the knight's head that ye shall fight withal, she will make her a queen. Now I understand you well, said Accolon : I shall hold that I have promised her, now I have the sword : when  
20 saw ye my lady queen Morgan le Fay ? Right late, said the dwarf. Then Accolon took him in his arms, and said, Recommend me unto my lady queen, and tell her all shall be done that I have promised her, and else I will die for it. Now I suppose, said Accolon, she hath made all these crafts and enchantments for this battle. Ye may well believe it, said the dwarf. Right so there came a knight and a lady with six squires, and saluted Sir Accolon and prayed him for to arise, and come and rest him at his manor. And so Accolon mounted upon a void horse, and went with the knight unto a fair manor by a  
30 priory, and there he had passing good cheer.

Then Sir Damas sent unto his brother Sir Ontzlake, and bade make him ready by to morn at the hour of prime, and to be in the field to fight with a good knight, for he had found a good knight that was ready to do battle at all points. When this word came unto Sir Ontzlake he was passing heavy, for he was wounded a little tofore through

both his thighs with a spear, and made great dole : but as he was wounded he would have taken the battle on hand. So it happened at that time, by the means of Morgan le Fay, Accolon was with Sir Ontzlake lodged ; and when he heard of that battle, and how Ontzlake was wounded, he said he would fight for him, because Morgan le Fay had sent him Excalibur and the sheath for to fight with the knight on the morn : this was the cause Sir Accolon took the battle on hand. Then Sir Ontzlake was passing glad, and thanked Sir Accolon with all his heart that he would 10 do so much for him. And therewithal Sir Ontzlake sent word unto his brother Sir Damas that he had a knight that for him should be ready in the field by the hour of prime. So on the morn Sir Arthur was armed and well horsed, and asked Sir Damas, When shall we to the field ? Sir, said Sir Damas, ye shall hear mass ; and so Arthur heard a mass. And when mass was done there came a squire on a great horse, and asked Sir Damas if his knight were ready, for our knight is ready in the field. Then Sir Arthur mounted upon horseback, and there were all 20 the knights and commons of that country ; and so by all advices there were chosen twelve good men of the country for to wait upon the two knights. And right as Arthur was upon horseback there came a damsel from Morgan le Fay, and brought unto Sir Arthur a sword like unto Excalibur, and the scabbard, and said unto Arthur, Morgan le Fay sendeth you here your sword for great love. And he thanked her, and wend it had been so, but she was false, for the sword and the scabbard was counterfeit, and brittle, and false.

30

*The duel*

And then they dressed them on both parts of the field, and let their horses run so fast that either smote other in the midst of the shield with their spears' head, that both horse and man went to the earth ; and then they started up both, and pulled out their swords. The mean while that they were thus at the battle, came the damsel of the



lake into the field, that put Merlin under the stone, and she came thither for love of king Arthur, for she knew how Morgan le Fay had so ordained that king Arthur should have been slain that day, and therefore she came to save his life. And so they went eagerly to the battle, and gave many great strokes. But alway King Arthur's sword bit not like Accolon's sword, but for the most part every stroke that Accolon gave, wounded he sore Arthur, that it was marvel he stood ; and alway his blood fell from  
10 him fast.

When Arthur beheld the ground so sore be-bled he was dismayed, and then he deemed treason, that his sword was changed ; for his sword bit not steel as it was wont to do, therefore he dread him sore to be dead, for ever him seemed that the sword in Accolon's hand was Excalibur, for at every stroke that Sir Accolon struck he drew blood on Arthur. Now knight, said Accolon unto Arthur, keep thee well from me : but Arthur answered not again, and gave him such a buffet on the helm that he  
20 made him to stoop, nigh falling down to the earth. Then Sir Accolon withdrew him a little, and come on with Excalibur on high, and smote Sir Arthur such a buffet that he fell nigh to the earth. Then were they wroth both, and gave each other many sore strokes, but always Sir Arthur lost so much blood that it was marvel he stood on his feet, but he was so full of knighthood that knightly he endured the pain. And Sir Accolon lost not a deal of blood, therefore he waxed passing light, and Sir Arthur was passing feeble, and wend verily to have died ; but for  
30 all that he made countenance as though he might endure, and held Accolon as short as he might. But Accolon was so bold because of Excalibur that he waxed passing hardy. But all men that beheld him said they never saw knight fight so well as Arthur did, considering the blood that he bled. So was all the people sorry for him, but the two brethren would not accord ; then always they fought to-

gether as fierce knights, and Sir Arthur withdrew him a little for to rest him, and Sir Accolon called him to battle, and said, It is no time for me to suffer thee to rest. And therewith he came fiercely upon Arthur, and Sir Arthur was wroth for the blood that he had lost, and smote Accolon on high upon the helm so mightily that he made him nigh to fall to the earth; and therewith Arthur's sword brast at the cross, and fell in the grass among the blood, and the pommel and the sure handles he held in his hands. When Sir Arthur saw that, he was in great fear 10 to die, but always he held up his shield, and lost no ground, nor bated no cheer.

Then Sir Accolon began with words of treason, and said, Knight, thou art overcome, and mayest not endure, and also thou art weaponless, and thou hast lost much of thy blood, and I am full loth to slay thee, therefore yield thee to me as recreant. Nay, said Sir Arthur, I may not so, for I have promised to do the battle to the uttermost by the faith of my body while me lasteth the life, and therefore I had lever to die with honour than to live with 20 shame; and if it were possible for me to die an hundred times I had lever to die so oft than yield me to thee; for though I lack weapon I shall lack no worship, and if thou slay me weaponless that shall be thy shame. Well, said Accolon, as for the shame I will not spare: now keep thee from me, for thou art but a dead man. And therewith Accolon gave him such a stroke that he fell nigh to the earth, and would have had Arthur to have cried him mercy. But Sir Arthur pressed unto Accolon with his shield, and gave him with the pommel in his hand such 30 a buffet that he went three strides aback. When the damsel of the lake beheld Arthur, how full of prowess his body was, and the false treason that was wrought for him to have had him slain, she had great pity that so good a knight and such a man of worship should be destroyed. And at the next stroke Sir Accolon struck him such a

stroke, that by the damsel's enchantment the sword Excalibur fell out of Accolon's hand to the earth; and therewithal Sir Arthur lightly leapt to it, and got it in his hand, and forthwithal he knew that it was his sword Excalibur, and said, Thou hast been from me all too long, and much damage hast thou done me. And therewith he espied the scabbard hanging by his side, and suddenly he start to him, and pulled the scabbard from him, and anon threw it from him as far as he might throw it. O knight, 10 said Arthur, this day hast thou done me great damage with this sword; now are ye come unto your death, for I shall not warrant you but ye shall as well be rewarded with this sword or ever we depart, as thou hast rewarded me, for much pain have ye made me to endure, and much blood have I lost.

And therewith Sir Arthur rushed on him with all his might and pulled him to the earth, and then rushed off his helm, and gave him such a buffet on the head that the blood came out at his ears, his nose, and his mouth. 20 Now will I slay thee, said Arthur. Slay me ye may well, said Accolon, and it please you, for ye are the best knight that ever I found, and I see well that God is with you: but for I promised to do this battle to the uttermost, said Accolon, and never to be recreant while I lived, therefore shall I never yield me with my mouth, but God do with my body what he will. Then Sir Arthur remembered him, and thought he should have seen this knight. Now tell me, said Arthur, or I will slay thee, of what country art thou, and of what court? Sir 30 knight, said Sir Accolon, I am of the court of king Arthur, and my name is Accolon of Gaul. Then was Arthur more dismayed than he was beforehand; for then he remembered him of his sister Morgan le Fay, and of the enchantment of the ship. O Sir knight, said he, I pray you tell me who gave you this sword, and by whom ye had it.

Then Sir Accolon bethought him, and said, Woe worth this sword, for by it have I gotten my death. It may well be, said the king. Now Sir, said Sir Accolon, I will tell you : This sword hath been in my keeping the most part of this twelvemonth, and Morgan le Fay, king Uriens' wife, sent it me yesterday by a dwarf, to this intent that I should slay king Arthur her brother. For ye shall understand king Arthur is the man in the world that she most hateth, because he is most of worship and of prowess of any of her blood. Also, she loveth me out of measure, and I her again. 10 And if she might bring about to slay Arthur by her crafts, she would slay her husband king Uriens lightly, and then had she me devised to be king in this land, and so to reign, and she to be my queen ; but that is now done, said Sir Accolon, for I am sure of my death. Well, said king Arthur, I feel by you ye would have been king in this land. It had been great damage for to have destroyed your lord, said Arthur. It is truth, said Sir Accolon, but now I have told you truth, wherefore I pray you tell me of whence ye are, and of what court? O Accolon, said king Arthur, now 20 I let thee wit that I am king Arthur to whom thou hast done great damage.

When Accolon heard that he cried aloud, Fair sweet lord, have mercy on me, for I knew you not. O Sir Accolon, said king Arthur, mercy shalt thou have, because I feel by thy words at this time thou knewest not my person. But I understand well by thy words that thou hast agreed to the death of my person, and therefore thou art a traitor ; but I blame thee the less, for my sister Morgan le Fay by her false crafts made thee to agree and 30 consent to her, but I shall be sore avenged upon her and I live, that all Christendom shall speak of it. God knoweth I have honoured her and worshipped her more than all my kin, and more have I trusted her than mine own wife, and all my kin after, Then Sir Arthur called the keepers of the field, and said, Sirs, come hither, for here are we two

knights that have fought unto a great damage unto us both, and like each one of us to have slain other, if it had happed so; and had any of us known other, here had been no battle, nor stroke stricken. Then all aloud cried Sir Accolon unto all the knights and men that were then there gathered together, and said to them in this manner: O lords, this noble knight that I have fought withal, the which me sore repenteth, is the most man of prowess, of manhood, and of worship in the world, for it is himself king Arthur, our alther liege  
10 lord, and with mishap and with misadventure have I done this battle with the king and lord that I am holden withal.

*Arthur  
does justice  
between Sir  
Damas and  
Sir Ontzlake.*

Then all the people fell down on their knees, and cried king Arthur mercy. Mercy shall ye have, said Arthur: here may ye see what adventures befall oftentimes of errant knights, how that I have fought with a knight of mine own unto my great damage and his both. But sirs, because I am sore hurt, and he both, and I had great need of a little rest, ye shall understand the opinion betwixt you two brethren. As to thee, Sir Damas, for whom I have been champion, and  
20 won the field of this knight, yet will I judge because ye Sir Damas are called an orgulous knight, and full of villainy, and not worth of prowess of your deeds, therefore I will that ye give unto your brother all the whole manor with the appurtenance, under this form, that Sir Ontzlake hold the manor of you, and yearly to give you a palfrey to ride upon, for that will become you better to ride on than upon a courser. Also I charge thee, Sir Damas, upon pain of death, that thou never distress no knights errant that ride on their adventure. And also that thou restore these  
30 twenty knights that thou hast long kept prisoners of all their harness that they be content for, and if any of them come to my court and complain of thee, by my head thou shalt die therefore. Also, Sir Ontzlake, as to you, because ye are named a good knight, and full of prowess, and true and gentle in all your deeds, this shall be your charge: I will give you that in all goodly haste ye come unto me and

my court, and ye shall be a knight of mine, and if your deeds be thereafter I shall so prefer you, by the grace of God, that ye shall in short time be in ease for to live as worshipfully as your brother Sir Damas.

God thank your largeness of your goodness and of your bounty, and I shall be from henceforth at all times at your commandment; for, Sir, said Sir Ontzlake, I was hurt but late with an adventurous knight through both my thighs, which grieved me sore, and else had I done this battle with you. Would, said Arthur, it had been 10 so, for then had I not been hurt as I am. I shall tell you the cause why: for I had not been hurt as I am had not it been mine own sword that was stolen from me by treason; and this battle was ordained aforehand to have slain me, and so it was brought to the purpose by false treason, and by false enchantment. Alas, said Sir Ontzlake, that is great pity, that ever so noble a man as ye are of your deeds and prowess, that any man or woman might find in their hearts to work any treason against you. I shall reward them, said Arthur, in short time by the grace of 20 God. Now tell me, said Arthur, how far am I from Camelot? Sir, ye are two days' journey therefrom. I would fain be at some place of worship, said Sir Arthur, that I might rest me. Sir, said Sir Ontzlake, hereby is a rich abbey of your elders' foundation, of Nuns, but three mile hence. So the king took his leave of all the people, and mounted upon horseback, and Sir Accolon with him. And when they were come to the abbey, he let fetch leeches and search his wounds and Accolon's both, but Sir Accolon died within four days, for he had bled so much blood that he might not 30 live, but king Arthur was well recovered. So when Accolon was dead he let send him on an horse-bier with six knights unto Camelot, and said, bear him to my sister Morgan le Fay, and say that I send her him to a present, and tell her that I have my sword Excalibur, and the scabbard. So they departed with the body.

*Morgan le  
Fay steals  
the scab-  
bard of  
Excalibur.*

Then came tidings unto Morgan le Fay that Accolon was dead, and his body brought unto the church, and how king Arthur had his sword again. But when queen Morgan wist that Accolon was dead she was so sorrowful that near her heart to burst. But because she would not it were known, outward she kept her countenance, and made no semblance of sorrow. But well she wist, and she abode till her brother Arthur came thither, there should no gold go for her life.

Then she went unto queen Guenever, and asked her leave  
10 to ride into the country. Ye may abide, said queen Guenever, till your brother the king come home. I may not, said Morgan le Fay, for I have such hasty tidings that I may not tarry. Well, said Guenever, ye may depart when ye will. So early on the morn, or it was day, she took her horse and rode all that day, and most part of the night, and on the morn by noon she came to the same abbey of nuns, whereas lay king Arthur, and she, knowing he was there, asked where he was: and they answered how he had laid him in his bed to sleep, for he had had but little rest these three  
20 nights. Well, said she, I charge you that none of you awake him till I do. And then she alight off her horse, and thought for to steal away Excalibur his sword, and so she went straight unto his chamber, and no man durst disobey her commandment, and there she found Arthur asleep in his bed, and Excalibur in his right hand naked.

When she saw that, she was passing heavy that she might not come by the sword without she had awaked him, and then she wist well she had been dead. Then she took the scabbard, and went her way on horseback.  
30 When the king awoke and missed his scabbard, he was wroth, and he asked who had been there, and they said his sister queen Morgan had been there, and had put the scabbard under her mantle, and was gone. Alas, said Arthur, falsely have ye watched me. Sir, said they all, we durst not disobey your sister's commandment. Ah, said the king, let fetch the best horse that may be

found, and bid Sir Ontzlake arm him in all haste, and take another good horse and ride with me. So anon the king and Ontzlake were well armed, and rode after this lady ; and so they came by a cross, and found a cowherd, and they asked the poor man if there came any lady late riding that way. Sir, said this poor man, right late came a lady riding with a forty horses, and to yonder forest she rode. Then they spurred their horses and followed fast, and within awhile Arthur had a sight of Morgan le Fay ; then he chased as fast as he might. When she espied him following her, she rode 10 a greater pace through the forest till she came to a plain. And when she saw she might not escape, she rode unto a lake thereby, and said, Whatsoever becometh of me, my brother shall not have this scabbard. And then she let throw the scabbard in the deepest of the water, so it sank, for it was heavy of gold and precious stones. Then she rode into a valley where many great stones were, and when she saw that she must be overtaken, she shaped herself, horse and man, by enchantment, unto a great marble stone. Anon withal came Sir Arthur and Sir Ontzlake, whereas the king 20 might not know his sister and her men, and one knight from another. Ah, said the king, here may ye see the vengeance of God, and now am I sorry that this misadventure is befallen. And then he looked for the scabbard, but it would not be found. So he returned to the abbey there he came from. So when Arthur was gone she turned all into the likeness as she and they were before, and said, Sirs, now may we go where we will.

And so she departed into the country of Gore, and there was she richly received, and made her castles and towns 30 passing strong, for always she drad much king Arthur. When the king had well rested him at the abbey he rode unto Camelot, and found his queen and his barons right glad of his coming.



## PART II.

## THE NOBLE TALE OF THE SANCGREAL.

## CHAPTER I.

*Galahad and the sword.*

AT the vigil of Pentecost, when all the fellowship of the Round Table were comen unto Camelot, and there heard their service, and the tables were set ready to the meat, right so entered into the hall a full fair gentlewoman on horseback, that had ridden full fast, for her horse was all besweat. Then she there alight, and came before the king, and saluted him; and then he said, Damsel, God thee bless! Sir, said she, I pray, you say me where Sir Launcelot is? Yonder ye may see him, said the king. Then she went unto  
 10 Launcelot and said, Sir Launcelot, I salute you on king Pelles' behalf, and I require you come on with me hereby into a forest. Then Sir Launcelot asked her with whom she dwelled? I dwell, said she, with king Pelles. What will ye with me? said Sir Launcelot. Ye shall know, said she, when ye come thither. Well, said he, I will gladly go with you. So Sir Launcelot bade his squire saddle his horse and bring his arms; and in all haste he did his commandment. Then came the queen unto Launcelot and said, Will ye leave us at this high feast? Madam, said the gentlewoman, wit  
 20 ye well he shall be with you to-morrow by dinner-time. If I wist, said the queen, that he should not be with us here to-morn, he should not go with you by my good will.

*Galahad is  
 knighted  
 by Sir  
 Launcelot.*

Right so departed Sir Launcelot with the gentlewoman, and rode until that he came into a forest, and into a great valley, where they saw an abbey of nuns; and there was a squire ready, and opened the gates; and ~~sa~~ they entered,

and descended off their horses, and there came a fair fellowship about Sir Launcelot and welcomed him, and were passing glad of his coming. And then they led him into the Abbess's chamber, and unarmed him, and right so he was ware upon a bed lying two of his cousins, Sir Bors and Sir Lionel, and then he waked them, and when they saw him they made great joy. Sir, said Sir Bors unto Sir Launcelot, what adventure hath brought thee hither, for we wend to-morrow to have found you at Camelot? Truly, said Sir Launcelot, a gentlewoman brought me hither, but I know 10 not the cause. In the meanwhile, as they thus stood talking together, there came twelve nuns which brought with them Galahad, the which was passing fair and well made, that unneth in the world men might not find his match; and all those ladies wept. Sir, said the ladies, we bring you here this child, the which we have nourished, and we pray you to make him a knight; for of a more worthier man's hand may he not receive the order of knighthood. Sir Launcelot beheld that young squire, and saw him seemly and demure as a dove, with all manner of good features, that he wend of his 20 age never to have seen so fair a man of form. Then said Sir Launcelot, Cometh this desire of himself? He and all they said, Yea. Then shall he, said Sir Launcelot, receive the high order of knighthood as to-morrow at the reverence of the high feast. That night Sir Launcelot had passing good cheer, and on the morn at the hour of prime, at Galahad's desire, he made him knight, and said, God make him a good man, for beauty faileth you not as any that liveth.

Now, fair sir, said Sir Launcelot, will ye come with me unto the court of king Arthur? Nay, said he, I will not 30 go with you as at this time. Then he departed from them and took his two cousins with him, and so they came unto Camelot by the hour of underne on Whitsunday. By that time the king and the queen were gone to the minster to hear their service: then the king and the queen were passing glad of Sir Bors and Sir Lionel, and so was all the fellow-

*The siege  
perilous  
and the ad-  
venture of  
the sword.*

ship. So when the king and all the knights were come from service, the barons espied in the sieges of the Round Table, all about written with gold letters—Here ought to sit he, and he ought to sit here. And thus they went so long until that they came to the siege perilous, where they found letters newly written of gold, that said: Four hundred winters and fifty-four accomplished after the passion of our Lord Jesu Christ ought this siege to be fulfilled. Then all they said, This is a marvellous thing, and an  
10 adventurous. In the name of God, said Sir Launcelot; and then he accounted the term of the writing, from the birth of our Lord unto that day. It seemeth me, said Sir Launcelot, this siege ought to be fulfilled this same day, for this is the feast of Pentecost after the four hundred and four and fifty year; and if it would please all parties, I would none of these letters were seen this day, till he be come that ought to achieve this adventure. Then made they to ordain a cloth of silk for to cover these letters in the siege perilous. Then the king bad haste  
20 unto dinner. Sir, said Sir Kay the steward, if ye go now unto your meat, ye shall break your old custom of your court. For ye have not used on this day to sit at your meat or that ye have seen some adventure. Ye say sooth, said the king, but I had so great joy of Sir Launcelot and of his cousins, which be come to the court whole and sound, that I bethought me not of my old custom. So as they stood speaking, in came a squire, and said unto the king, Sir, I bring unto you marvellous tidings. What be they? said the king. Sir, there is here beneath at the  
30 river a great stone, which I saw fleet above the water, and therein saw I sticking a sword. The king said, I will see that marvel. So all the knights went with him, and when they came unto the river, they found there a stone fleeting, as it were of red marble, and therein stack a fair and a rich sword, and in the pommel thereof were precious stones, wrought with subtil letters of gold. Then the barons read

the letters, which said in this wise: Never shall man take me hence but only he by whose side I ought to hang, and he shall be the best knight of the world. When the king had seen these letters, he said unto Sir Launcelot, Fair sir, this sword ought to be yours, for I am sure ye be the best knight of the world. Then Sir Launcelot answered full soberly: Certes, sir, it is not my sword: also, sir, wit ye well I have no hardiness to set my hand to, for it longed not to hang by my side. Also who that assayeth to take that sword, and faileth of it, he shall receive a 10 wound by that sword, that he shall not be whole long after. And I will that ye wit that this same day will the adventures of the Sancgreal, that is called the holy vessel, begin.

Now, fair nephew, said the king unto Sir Gawaine, assay ye for my love. Sir, he said, save your godd grace, I shall not do that. Sir, said the king, assay to take the sword, and at my commandment. Sir, said Gawaine, your commandment I will obey. And therewith he took up the sword by the handles, but he might not stir it. I thank you, said the king to Sir Gawaine. My lord Sir Gawaine, 20 said Sir Launcelot, now wit ye well, this sword shall touch you so sore that ye shall will ye had never set your hand thereto, for the best castle of this realm. Sir, he said, I might not withsay mine uncle's will and commandment. But when the king heard this, he repented it much, and said unto Sir Percivale that he should assay for his love. And he said, Gladly, for to bear Sir Gawaine fellowship. And therewith he set his hand on the sword, and drew it strongly, but he might not move it. Then were there more that durst be so hardy to set their hands thereto. 30 Now may ye go to your dinner, said Sir Kay unto the king, for a marvellous adventure have ye seen.

So the king and all went unto the court, and every knight knew his own place, and set him therein, and young men that were knights served them. So when they were served, and all sieges fulfilled, save only the siege perilous, anon

there befell a marvellous adventure, that all the doors and the windows of the place shut by themself. Not for then the hall was not greatly darkened, and therewith they abashed both one and other. Then king Arthur spake first, and said, Fair fellows and lords, we have seen this day marvels, but or night I suppose we shall see greater marvels. In the mean while came in a good old man, and an ancient, clothed all in white, and there was no knight knew from whence he came. And with him he brought  
10 a young knight, both on foot, in red arms, without sword or shield, save a scabbard hanging by his side. And these words he said, Peace be with you, fair lords. Then the old man said unto Arthur, Sir, I bring here a young knight the which is of king's lineage, and of the kindred of Joseph of Arimathie, whereby the marvels of this court and of strange realms shall be fully accomplished.

*Galahad  
achieves the  
adventure.*

The king was right glad of his words, and said unto the good man, Sir, ye be right welcome, and the young knight with you. Then the old man made the young man  
20 to unarm him; and he was in a coat of red sendel, and bare a mantle upon his shoulder that was furred with ermine, and put that upon him. And the old knight said unto the young knight, Sir, follow me. And anon he led him unto the siege perilous, where beside sat Sir Launcelot, and the good man lift up the cloth, and found there letters that said thus: This is the siege of Galahad the haut prince. Sir, said the old knight, wit ye well that place is yours. And then he set him down surely in that siege. And then he said to the old man, Sir, ye may now  
30 go your way, for well have ye done that ye were commanded to do. And recommend me unto my grandsire king Pelles, and say to him on my behalf, I shall come and see him as soon as ever I may. So the good man departed, and there met him twenty noble squires, and so took their horses and went their way. Then all the knights of the Table Round marvelled them greatly of

Sir Galahad, that he durst sit there in that siege perilous, and was so tender of age, and wist not from whence he came, but all only by God, and said, This is he by whom the Sancgreal shall be achieved, for there sat never none but he, but he were mischieved. Then Sir Launcelot beheld his son, and had great joy of him. Then Sir Bors told his fellows, Upon pain of my life this young knight shall come unto great worship.

This noise was great in all the court, so that it came to the queen. Then she had marvel what knight it might be 10 that durst adventure him to sit in the siege perilous. Many said unto the queen, he resembled much unto Sir Launcelot. I may well suppose, said the queen, that he is son of Sir Launcelot and king Pelles' daughter, and his name is Galahad. I would fain see him, said the queen, for he must needs be a noble man, for so is his father; I report me unto all the Table Round. So when the meat was done, that the king and all were risen, the king went unto the siege perilous, and lift up the cloth, and found there the name of Galahad, and then he shewed it unto 20 Sir Gawaine, and said, Fair nephew, now have we among us Sir Galahad the good knight, that shall worship us all, and upon pain of my life he shall achieve the Sancgreal, right so as Sir Launcelot hath done us to understand. Then came king Arthur unto Galahad, and said, Sir, ye be welcome, for ye shall move many good knights to the quest of the Sancgreal, and ye shall achieve that never knights might bring to an end. Then the king took him by the hand, and went down from the palace to shew Galahad the adventures of the stone.

30

The queen heard thereof, and came after with many ladies, and shewed them the stone where it hove on the water. Sir, said the king unto Sir Galahad, here is a great marvel as ever I saw, and right good knights have assayed and failed. Sir, said Galahad, that is no marvel, for this adventure is not theirs, but mine, and for the

surety of this sword I brought none with me ; for here by my side hangeth the scabbard. And anon he laid his hand on the sword, and lightly drew it out of the stone, and put it in the sheath and said unto the king, Now it goeth better than it did aforehand. Sir, said the king, a shield God shall send you.

## CHAPTER II.

### *The Institution of the Quest.*

*The tournament.*

Now, said the king, I am sure at this quest of the Sancgreal shall all ye of the Table Round depart, and never shall I see you again whole together, therefore I will  
10 see you all whole together in the meadow of Camelot, to just and to tourney, that after your death men may speak of it, that such good knights were wholly together such a day. As unto that counsel, and at the king's request, they accorded all, and took on their harness that longed unto justing. But all this moving of the king was for this intent, for to see Galahad proved, for the king deemed he should not lightly come again unto the court after his departing. So were they assembled in the meadow, both more and less. Then Sir Galahad, by the prayer of the  
20 king and the queen, did upon him a noble jesserance, and also he did on his helm, but shield would he take none for no prayer of the king. And then Sir Gawaine and other knights prayed him to take a spear. Right so he did ; and the queen was in a tower with all her ladies for to behold that tournament. Then Sir Galahad dressed him in the midst of the meadow, and began to break spears marvellously, that all men had wonder of him, for he there surmounted all other knights, for within a while he had thrown down many good knights of the Table Round  
30 save twain, that was Sir Launcelot and Sir Percivale.

And then the king and all estates went home unto Camelot, and so went to evensong to the great minster. And so after upon that to supper, and every knight sat in his own place as they were toforehand. Then anon they heard cracking and crying of thunder, that them thought the place should all to-drive. In the midst of this blast entered a sun-beam more clearer by seven times than ever they saw day, and all they were alighted of the grace of the Holy Ghost. Then began every knight to behold other, and either saw other by their seeming fairer 10 than ever they saw afore. Not for then there was no knight might speak one word a great while, and so they looked every man on other, as they had been dumb. Then there entered into the hall the holy Graile, covered with white samite, but there was none might see it, nor who bare it. And there was all the hall fulfilled with good odours, and every knight had such meats and drinks as he best loved in this world · and when the holy Graile had been borne through the hall, then the holy vessel departed suddenly, that they wist not where it became. Then had 20 they all breath to speak. And then the king yielded thankings unto God of his good grace that he had sent them. Certes, said the king, we ought to thank our Lord Jesu greatly, for that he hath shewed us this day at the reverence of this high feast of Pentecost. Now, said Sir Gawaine, we have been served this day of what meats and drinks we thought on, but one thing beguiled us, we might not see the holy Graile, it was so preciousely covered. wherefore I will make here avow, that to-morn, without longer abiding, I shall labour in the quest of the 30 Sancgreal, that I shall hold me out a twelvemonth and a day, or more if need be, and never shall I return again unto the court till I have seen it more openly than it hath been seen here: and if I may not speed, I shall return again as he that may not be against the will of our Lord Jesu Christ. When they of the Table Round

*The vision  
of the  
Graile.*



heard Sir Gawaine say so, they rose up the most party, and made such avows as Sir Gawaine had made.

Anon as king Arthur heard this he was greatly displeased, for he wist well that they might not againsay their avows. Alas! said king Arthur unto Sir Gawaine, ye have nigh slain me with the avow and promise that ye have made. For through you ye have bereft me of the fairest fellowship and the truest of knighthood that ever were seen together in any realm of the world. For  
10 when they depart from hence, I am sure they all shall never meet more in this world, for they shall die many in the quest. And so it forethinketh me a little, for I have loved them as well as my life, wherefore it shall grieve me right sore the departition of this fellowship. For I have had an old custom to have them in my fellowship.

And therewith the tears filled in his eyes. And then he said, Gawaine, Gawaine, ye have set me in great sorrow. For I have great doubt that my true fellowship shall never meet here more again. Ah, said Sir Launcelot,  
20 comfort yourself, for it shall be unto us as a great honour, and much more than if we died in any other places, for of death we be sure. Ah Launcelot, said the king, the great love that I have had unto you all the days of my life maketh me to say such doleful words; for never christian king had never so many worthy men at this table as I have had this day at the Round Table, and that is my great sorrow. When the queen, ladies, and gentlewomen wist these tidings, they had such sorrow and heaviness that there might no tongue tell it, for those  
30 knights had holden them in honour and charity. But among all other queen Guenever made great sorrow. I marvel, said she, my lord would suffer them to depart from him. Thus was all the court troubled, for the love of the departition of those knights. And many of those ladies that loved knights would have gone with their lovers; and so had they done, had not an old knight come

among them in religious clothing, and then he spake all on high and said, Fair lords which have sworn in the quest of the Sancgreal, thus sendeth you Nacien the hermit word, that none in this quest lead lady nor gentlewoman with him, for it is not to do in so high a service as they labour in, for I warn you plain, he that is not clean of his sins he shall not see the mysteries of our Lord Jesu Christ; and for this cause they left these ladies and gentlewomen. And then they went to rest them. And in the honour of the highness of Galahad he was led 10 into king Arthur's chamber and there rested in his own bed.

And as soon as it was day the king arose, for he had no rest of all that night for sorrow. Then he went unto Gawaine and to Sir Launcelot, that were arisen for to hear mass. And then the king again said, Ah Gawaine, Gawaine, ye have betrayed me. For never shall my court be amended by you, but ye will never be sorry for me, as I am for you. And therewith the tears began to run down by his visage. And therewith the king said, Ah knight, Sir Launcelot, I require 20 thee thou counsel me, for I would that this quest were undone, and it might be. Sir, said Sir Launcelot, ye saw yesterday so many worthy knights that then were sworn, that they may not leave it in no manner of wise. That wot I well, said the king, but it shall so heavy me at their departing, that I wot well there shall no manner of joy remedy me. And then the king and the queen went unto the minster. So anon Launcelot and Gawaine commanded their men to bring their arms. And when they all were armed, save their shields and their helms, then 30 they came to their fellowship, which all were ready in the same wise for to go to the minster to hear their service.

Then after the service was done, the king would wit how many had taken the quest of the holy Graile, and to account them he prayed them all. Then found they by tale an hundred and fifty, and all were knights of the

*The departure  
of the  
knights*

Round Table. And then they put on their helms, and departed, and recommended them all wholly unto the queen, and there was weeping and great sorrow. Then the queen departed into her chamber so that no man should perceive her great sorrows. When Sir Launcelot missed the queen he went into her chamber, and when she saw him she cried aloud, O, Sir Launcelot, ye have betrayed me and put me to death, for to leave thus my lord. Ah, madam, said Sir Launcelot, I pray you be not  
10 displeased, for I shall come again as soon as I may with my worship. Alas, said she, that ever I saw you! but He that suffered death upon the cross for all mankind, be to your good conduct and safety, and all the whole fellowship. Right so departed Sir Launcelot, and found his fellowship that abode his coming. And so they mounted upon their horses, and rode through the streets of Camelot, and there was weeping of the rich and poor, and the king turned away, and might not speak for weeping. So within a while they came to a city and a castle that high  
20 Vagon: there they entered into the castle, and the lord of that castle was an old man that hight Vagon, and he was a good man of his living, and set open the gates, and made them all the good cheer that he might. And so on the morrow they were all accorded that they should depart every each from other. And then they departed on the morrow with weeping and mourning cheer, and every knight took the way that him best liked.

### CHAPTER III.

#### *The adventures of Sir Galahad.*

*Sir Galahad wins the shield.*

Now rideth Sir Galahad yet without shield, and so he rode four days without any adventure. And at the fourth  
30 day after even-song he came to a white abbey, and there

he was received with great reverence, and led to a chamber, and then he was unarmed, and then was he ware of two knights of the Round Table, one was king Bagdemagus, and that other was Sir Uwayne. And when they saw him they went unto him and made of him great solace, and so they went to supper. Sirs, said Sir Galahad, what adventure brought you hither? Sir, said they, it is told us that within this place is a shield that no man may bear about his neck but that if he be mischieved or dead within three days, or else maimed for ever. Ah, sir, said king Bagdemagus, I shall bear it to-morrow for to assay this strange adventure. In the name of God, said Sir Galahad. Sir, said Bagdemagus, and I may not achieve the adventure of this shield ye shall take it upon you, for I am sure ye shall not fail. Sir, said Galahad, I agree right well thereto, for I have no shield. So on the morn they arose and heard mass. Then king Bagdemagus asked where the adventurous shield was. Anon a monk led him behind an altar where the shield hung as white as any snow, but in the midst was a red cross. Sir, said the monk, this shield ought not to be hanged about no knight's neck, but he be the worthiest knight of the world, and therefore I counsel you knights to be well advised. Well, said king Bagdemagus, I wot well that I am not the best knight of the world, but yet shall I assay to bear it. And so he bare it out of the monastery; and then he said unto Sir Galahad, If it will please you, I pray you abide here still, till ye know how I shall speed. I shall abide you here, said Galahad. Then king Bagdemagus took with him a squire, the which should bring tidings unto Sir Galahad how he sped. Then when they had ridden a two mile, and came in a fair valley afore an hermitage, then they saw a goodly knight come from that part in white armour, horse and all, and he came as fast as his horse might run with his spear in the rest; and king Bagdemagus dressed his spear against him, and brake

it upon the white knight; but the other struck him so hard that he brake the mails, and thrust him through the right shoulder, for the shield covered him not as at that time, and so he bare him from his horse, and therewith he alighted and took the white shield from him, saying, Knight, thou hast done thyself great folly, for this shield ought not to be borne but by him that shall have no peer that liveth. And then he came to king Bagdemagus' squire and said, Bear this shield unto the good knight  
10 Sir Galahad, that thou left in the abbey, and greet him well from me. Sir, said the squire, what is your name? Take thou no heed of my name, said the knight, for it is not for thee to know, nor for none earthly man. Now, fair sir, said the squire, at the reverence of Jesu Christ tell me for what cause this shield may not be borne, but if the bearer thereof be mischieved. Now, sith thou hast conjured me so, said the knight, this shield behoveth to no man but unto Galahad. And the squire went unto Bagdemagus and asked him whether he were sore wounded  
20 or not? Yea forsooth, said he, I shall escape hard from the death. Then he fetched his horse, and brought him with great pain unto an abbey. Then was he taken down softly, and unarmed, and laid in a bed, and there was looked to his wounds. And, as the book telleth, he lay there long, and escaped hard with the life.

Sir Galahad, said the squire, that knight that wounded Bagdemagus sendeth you greeting, and bad that ye should bear this shield, where through great adventures should befall. Now blessed be God and fortune, said Sir Gala-  
30 had. And then he asked his arms, and mounted upon his horse, and hung the white shield about his neck, and commended them unto God. And Sir Uwayne said he would bear him fellowship, if it pleased him. Sir, said Galahad, that may ye not, for I must go alone, save this squire shall bear me fellowship: and so departed Uwayne. Then within a while came Galahad there as the white knight

abode him by the hermitage, and every each saluted other courteously. So Sir Galahad rested him there that night.

And upon the morn he made the squire knight, and asked him his name, and of what kindred he was come. Sir, said he, men call me Melias de Lile, and I am the son of the king of Denmark. Now, fair sir, said Galahad, sith ye be come of kings and queens, now look that knighthood be well set in you, for ye ought to be a mirror unto all chivalry. Sir, said Melias, ye say sooth. But, sir, sithen ye have made me a knight, ye must of 10 right grant me my first desire that is reasonable. Ye say sooth, said Galahad. Then Melias said, that ye will suffer me to ride with you in this quest of the Sancgreal till that some adventure depart us.—I grant you, sir. Then men brought Sir Melias his armour, and his spear, and his horse; and so Sir Galahad and he rode forth all that week ere they found any adventure. And then upon a Monday, in the morning, as they were departed from an abbey, they came to a cross which departed two ways; and in that cross were letters written, that said thus: 20 Now ye knights errant, the which goeth to seek knights adventurous, see here two ways; that one way defendeth thee that thou ne go that way, for he shall not go out of the way again, but if he be a good man and a worthy knight; and if thou go on the left hand, thou shalt not there lightly win prowess, for thou shalt in this way be soon assayed. Sir, said Melias to Galahad, if it like you to suffer me to take the way on the left hand, tell me, for there I shall well prove my strength. It were better, said Galahad, ye rode not that way, for I deem I should 30 better escape in that way than ye.—Nay, my lord, I pray you let me have that adventure.—Take it, in God's name, said Galahad.

And then rode Melias into an old forest, and therein he rode two days and more. And then he came into a fair meadow, and there was a fair lodge of boughs. And

*The ad-  
venture of  
Sir Melias*

- then he espied in that lodge a chair, wherein was a crown of gold subtilly wrought. Also there was clothes covered upon the earth, and many delicious meats were set thereon. Sir Melias beheld this adventure, and thought it marvellous, but he had no hunger, but of the crown of gold he took much keep, and therewith he stooped down, and took it up, and rode his way with it. And anon he saw a knight came riding after him that said, Knight, set down that crown which is not yours, and therefore defend you.
- 10 Then Sir Melias blessed him, and said, Fair Lord of heaven, help and save thy new-made knight. And then they let their horses run as fast as they might, so that the other knight smote Sir Melias through hauberk and through the left side, that he fell to the earth nigh dead. And then he took the crown and went his way, and Sir Melias lay still and had no power to stir.

*He is  
rescued  
by Sir  
Galahad.*

- In the meanwhile by fortune there came Sir Galahad and found him there in peril of death. And then he said, Ah, Melias, who hath wounded you? therefore it had been better
- 20 to have ridden that other way. And when Sir Melias heard him speak, Sir, he said, for God's love let me not die in this forest, but bear me unto the abbey here beside, that I may be confessed and have my rites. It shall be done, said Galahad, but where is he that hath wounded you? With that Sir Galahad heard in the leaves cry on high, Knight, keep thee from me! Ah sir, said Melias, beware, for that is he that hath slain me. Sir Galahad answered, Sir knight, come on your peril. Then either dressed to other, and came together as fast as their horses might run; and
- 30 Galahad smote him so that his spear went through his shoulder, and smote him down off his horse, and in the falling Galahad's spear brake. With that came out another knight out of the leaves and brake a spear upon Galahad, or ever he might turn him. Then Galahad drew out his sword and smote off the left arm of him, so that it fell to the earth. And then he fled and Sir Galahad sued

fast after him. And then he turned again unto Sir Melias, and there he alight and dressed him softly on his horse tofore him, for the truncheon of his spear was in his body, and Sir Galahad start up behind him, and held him in his arms, and so brought him to the abbey, and there unarmed him and brought him to his chamber. And then he asked his Saviour. And when he had received Him he said unto Sir Galahad, Sir, let death come when it pleaseth him. And therewith he drew out the truncheon of the spear out of his body : and then he swooned. Then came there 10 an old monk, which sometime had been a knight, and beheld Sir Melias. And anon he ransacked him, and then he said unto Sir Galahad, I shall heal him of this wound, by the grace of God, within the term of seven weeks. Then was Sir Galahad glad, and unarmed him, and said he would abide there three days. And then he asked Sir Melias how it stood with him. Then he said, he was turned unto helping, God be thanked.

Now will I depart, said Galahad, for I have much on hand, for many good knights be full busy about it, and 20 this knight and I were in the same quest of the Sancgreal. Sir, said a good man, for his sin he was thus wounded : and I marvel, said the good man, how ye durst take upon you so rich a thing as the high order of knighthood without clean confession, and that was the cause ye were bitterly wounded. For the way on the right hand betokeneth the high way of our Lord Jesu Christ, and the way of a true good liver. And the other way betokeneth the way of sinners and of misbelievers. And when the devil saw your pride and presumption for to take you in the quest of the holy Sanc- 30 greal, that made you to be overthrown, for it may not be achieved but by virtuous living. Also, the writing on the cross was a signification of heavenly deeds, and of knightly deeds in God's works, and no knightly deeds in worldly works ; and pride is head of all deadly sins, that caused this knight to depart from Sir Galahad : and where thou

*The adventure is explained.*



tookest the crown of gold thou sinnedst in covetise and in theft. All this were no knightly deeds. And this Galahad the holy knight, the which fought with the two knights, the two knights signify the two deadly sins which were wholly in this knight Sir Melias, and they might not withstand you, for ye are without deadly sin. Now departed Galahad from thence, and betaught them all unto God. Sir Melias said, My lord Galahad, as soon as I may ride I shall seek you. God send you health, said Galahad ; and so took his horse  
10 and departed and rode many journeys forward and backward, as adventure would lead him.

## CHAPTER IV.

*Sir Percivale.*

*Sir Percivale's horse is slain.*

Now saith the tale, that Sir Percivale departed and rode till the hour of noon. And he met in a valley about twenty men of arms, which bare in a bier a knight deadly slain. And when they saw Sir Percivale, they asked him of whence he was ; and he answered, Of the court of king Arthur. Then they cried all at once, Slay him. Then Sir Percivale smote the first to the earth, and his horse upon him. And then seven of the knights smote upon his shield all  
20 at once, and the remnant slew his horse, so that he fell to the earth. So had they slain him or taken him, had not the good knight Sir Galahad, with the red arms, come there by adventure into those parts. And when he saw all those knights upon one knight, he cried, Save me that knight's life. And then he dressed him toward the twenty men of arms as fast as his horse might drive, with his spear in the rest, and smote the foremost horse and man to the earth. And when his spear was broken he set his hand to his sword, and smote on the  
30 right hand and on the left hand, that it was marvel to see.

And at every stroke he smote one down, or put him to a rebuke, so that they would fight no more, but fled to a thick forest, and Sir Galahad followed them. And when Sir Percivale saw him chase them so, he made great sorrow that his horse was away. And then he wist well it was Sir Galahad. And then he cried aloud, Ah fair knight, abide and suffer me to do thankings unto thee, for much have ye done for me ! But ever Sir Galahad rode so fast, that at the last he passed out of his sight. And as fast as Sir Percivale might he went after him on foot, crying. And then he met 10 with a yeoman riding upon an hackney, the which led in his hand a great black steed, blacker than any bear. Ah fair friend, said Sir Percivale, as ever I may do for you, and to be your true knight in the first place ye will require me, that ye will lend me that black steed, that I might overtake a knight, the which rideth afore me. Sir knight, said the yeoman, I pray you hold me excused of that, for that I may not do. For wit ye well, the horse is such a man's horse. that, and I lent it you or any other man, that he would slay me. Alas, said Sir Percivale, I had 20 never so great sorrow as I have had for losing of yonder knight. Sir, said the yeoman, I am right heavy for you, for a good horse would beseem you well, but I dare not deliver you this horse, but if ye would take him from me. That will I not do, said Sir Percivale. And so they departed, and Sir Percivale sat him down under a tree, and made sorrow out of measure. And as he was there, there came a knight riding on the horse that the yeoman led, and he was clean armed.

And anon the yeoman came pricking after as fast as 30 ever he might, and asked Sir Percivale if he saw any knight riding on his black steed ? Yea sir, forsooth, said he, why ask ye me that ? Ah, sir, that steed he hath taken from me with strength, wherefore my lord will slay me in what place he findeth me. Well, said Sir Percivale, what wouldest thou that I did ? thou seest well that I am

on foot, but and I had a good horse I should bring him soon again. Sir, said the yeoman, take mine hackney and do the best ye can, and I shall follow you on foot, to wit how that ye shall speed. Then Sir Percivale alight upon that hackney, and rode as fast as he might. And at the last he saw that knight. And then he cried, Knight, turn again; and he turned, and set his spear against Sir Percivale, and he smote the hackney in the midst of the breast, that he fell down dead to the earth, and there he had a  
 10 great fall, and the other rode his way. And then Sir Percivale was wood wroth, and cried, Abide, wicked knight, coward and false-hearted knight, turn again and fight with me on foot. But he answered not, but past on his way. When Sir Percivale saw he would not turn, he cast away his helm and sword, and said, Now am I a very wretch, cursed, and most unhappy above all other knights.

*The adventure of  
the black  
horse.*

So in this sorrow he abode all that day till it was night, and then he was faint, and laid him down and  
 20 slept till it was midnight. And then he awaked, and saw afore him a woman which said unto him right fiercely, Sir Percivale, what doest thou here? He answered and said, I do neither good nor great ill. If thou wilt ensure me, said she, that thou wilt fulfil my will when I summon thee, I shall lend thee mine own horse, which shall bear thee whither thou wilt. Sir Percivale was glad of her proffer, and ensured her to fulfil all her desire.—Then abide me here, and I shall go fetch you an horse. And so she came soon again, and brought an horse with her  
 30 that was inly black. When Sir Percivale beheld that horse, he marvelled that it was so great and so well apparelled: and not for then he was so hardy, and he leapt upon him, and took none heed of himself. And so anon as he was upon him he thrust to him with his spurs, and so rode by a forest, and the moon shone clear. And within an hour and less, he bare him four days' journey

thence, till he came to a rough water the which roared, and his horse would have borne him into it.

And when Sir Percivale came nigh the brim, and saw the water so boisterous, he doubted to overpass it. And then he made a sign of the cross in his forehead. When the fiend felt him so charged, he shook off Sir Percivale, and he went into the water, crying and roaring, making great sorrow; and it seemed unto him that the water burnt. Then Sir Percivale perceived it was a fiend, the which would have brought him unto his perdition. 10 Then he commended himself unto God, and prayed our Lord to keep him from all such temptations. And so he prayed all that night, till on the morn that it was day. Then he saw that he was in a wild mountain the which was closed with the sea nigh all about, that he might see no land about him which might relieve him, but wild beasts.

And then he went into a vallev, and there he saw a young serpent bring a young lion by the neck, and so he came by Sir Percivale. With that came a great 20 lion crying and roaring after the serpent. And as fast as Sir Percivale saw this, he marvelled, and hied him thither, but anon the lion had overtaken the serpent, and began battle with him. And then Sir Percivale thought to help the lion, for he was the more natural beast of the two; and therewith he drew his sword, and set his shield afore him, and there gave the serpent such a buffet that he had a deadly wound. When the lion saw that, he made no resemblant to fight with him, but made him all the cheer that a beast might make a man. Then Sir 30 Percivale perceived that, and cast down his shield, which was broken, and then he did off his helm for to gather wind, for he was greatly enchafed with the serpent. And the lion went alway about him fawning as a spaniel. And then he stroked him on the neck and on the shoulders. And then he thanked God of the fellowship of that

*The adventure of the serpent and the lion.*

beast. And about noon, the lion took his little whelp, and trussed him, and bare him there he came from. Then was Sir Percivale alone. And as the tale telleth, he was one of the men of the world at that time that most believed in our Lord Jesu Christ. For in these days there were few folks that believed in God perfectly. For in those days the son spared not the father no more than a stranger. And so Sir Percivale comforted himself in our Lord Jesu, and besought God that no temptation should  
10 bring him out of God's service, but to endure as his true champion. Thus when Sir Percivale had prayed, he saw the lion come toward him, and then he couched down at his feet.

*Sir Perci-  
vale's  
dream*

And so all that night the lion and he slept together : and when Sir Percivale slept he dreamed a marvellous dream, that there two ladies met with him, and that one sat upon a lion, and that other sat upon a serpent, and that one of them was young, and the other was old, and the youngest, him thought, said : Sir Percivale, my  
20 lord saluteth thee, and sendeth thee word that thou array thee and make thee ready, for to-morn thou must fight with the strongest champion of the world. And if thou be overcome, thou shalt not be quit for losing of any of thy members, but thou shalt be shamed for ever to the world's end. And then he asked her what was her lord. And she said, the greatest lord of all the world. And so she departed suddenly, that he wist not where.

Then came forth the other lady that rode upon the serpent, and she said, Sir Percivale, I complain me of you  
30 that ye have done unto me, and have not offended unto you. Certes, madam, said he, unto you nor no lady I never offended. Yes, said she, I shall tell you why. I have nourished in this place a great while a serpent, which served me a great while, and yesterday ye slew him as he gat his prey. Say me for what cause ye slew him, for the lion was not yours? Madam, said Sir Perci-

vale, I know well the lion was not mine, but I did it, for the lion is of a more gentler nature than the serpent, and therefore I slew him ; me seemeth I did not amiss against you. Madam, said he, what would ye that I did ? I would, said she, for the amends of my beast that ye become my man. And then he answered, That will I not grant you. No, said she, truly ye were never but my servant, since ye received the homage of our Lord Jesu Christ. Therefore I ensure you in what place I may find you without keeping, I shall take you as he that some- 10 time was my man. And so she departed from Sir Percivale, and left him sleeping, the which was sore travailed of his vision. And on the morn he rose and blessed him, and he was passing feeble.

Then was Sir Percivale ware in the sea, and saw a ship come sailing toward him, and Sir Percivale went unto the ship, and found it covered within and without with white samite. And at the board stood an old man clothed in a surplice in likeness of a priest. Sir, said Sir Percivale, ye be welcome. God keep you, said 20 the good man. Sir, said the old man, of whence be ye ? Sir, said Sir Percivale, I am of king Arthur's court, and a knight of the Table Round, the which am in the quest of the Sancgreal, and here I am in great duress, and never like to escape out of this wilderness. Doubt not, said the good man, and ye be so true a knight as the order of chivalry requireth, and of heart as ye ought to be, ye should not doubt that none enemy should slay you. What are ye ? said Sir Percivale. Sir, said the old man, I am of a strange country, and hither I come to 30 comfort you. Sir, said Sir Percivale, what signifieth my dream that I dreamed this night ? And there he told him altogether. She which rode upon the lion, said the good man, betokeneth the new law of holy Church, that is to understand faith, good hope, belief, and baptism. For she seemed younger than the other, it is great

*The  
dream is  
explained.*

reason, for she was born in the resurrection and the passion of our Lord Jesu Christ. And for great love she came to thee, to warn thee of thy great battle that shall befall thee. With whom, said Sir Percivale, shall I fight? With the most champion of the world, said the old man, for, as the lady said, but if thou quit thee well, thou shalt not be quit by losing of one member, but thou shalt be shamed to the world's end. And she that rode upon the serpent signifieth the old law, and 10 that serpent betokeneth a fiend. And why she blamed thee that thou slewest her servant, it betokeneth nothing the serpent that thou slewest betokeneth the devil that thou rodest upon to the rock, and when thou madest a sign of the cross, there thou slewest him, and put away his power. And when she asked thee amends and to become her man, and thou saidest thou wouldest not, that was to make thee to believe on her and leave thy baptism. So he commanded Sir Percivale to depart. And so he leapt over the board, and the ship and all went away he 20 wist not whither. Then he went up unto the rock and found the lion, which alway kept him fellowship, and he stroked him upon the back, and had great joy of him.

*The tempta-  
tion of  
Sir Perci-  
vale.*

By that Sir Percivale had abiden there till midday he saw a ship come rowing in the sea as all the wind of the world had driven it. And so it drove under that rock. And when Sir Percivale saw this, he hied him thither, and found the ship covered with silk more blacker than any bier, and therein was a gentlewoman of great beauty, and she was clothed richly that none might 30 be better. And when she saw Sir Percivale, she said, Who brought you in this wilderness where ye be never like to pass hence? for ye shall die here for hunger and mischief. Damsel, said Sir Percivale, I serve the best man of the world, and in his service he will not suffer me to die, for who that knocketh shall enter, and who that asketh shall have, and who that seeketh

him, he hideth him not. But then she said, Sir Percivale wot ye what I am? Yea, said he. Now who taught you my name? said she. Now, said Sir Percivale, I know you better than ye ween. And I came out of the waste forest, where I found the red knight with the white shield, said the damsel. Ah damsel, said he, with that knight would I meet passing fain. Sir, said she, and ye will ensure me, by the faith that ye owe unto knighthood, that ye shall do my will what time I summon you, I shall bring you unto that knight. Yea, 10 said he, I shall promise you to fulfil your desire. Well, said she, now shall I tell you, I saw him in the forest chasing two knights to a water, the which is called Mortaise, and he drove them into that water for dread of death, and the two knights passed over; and the red knight passed after, and there his horse was drenched, and he through great strength escaped unto the land. Thus she told him, and Sir Percivale was passing glad thereof.

Then she asked him if he had eaten any meat late? 20 Nay madam, truly I ate no meat nigh these three days, but late here I spake with a good man that fed me with his good words and holy, and refreshed me greatly. Ah, sir knight, said she, that same man is an enchanter, and a multiplier of words. For, and ye believe him, ye shall plainly be shamed, and die in this rock for pure hunger, and be eaten with wild beasts, and ye be a young man and a goodly knight, and I shall help you and ye will. What are ye? said Sir Percivale, that proffereth me thus great kindness. I am, said she, a 30 gentlewoman that am disherited, which was sometime the richest woman of the world. Damsel, said Sir Percivale, who hath disherited you, for I have great pity of you? Sir, said she, I dwelled with the greatest man of the world, and he made me so fair and so clear that there was none like me, and of that great beauty I had a



little pride, more than I ought to have had. Also, I said a word that pleased him not. And then he would not suffer me to be any longer in his company, and so drove me from mine heritage, and so disherited me, and he had never pity of me nor of none of my council, nor of my court. And sithen, sir knight, it hath befallen me so, and through me and mine I have taken from him many of his men, and made them to become my men. For they ask never nothing of me but I give it them, 10 that and much more. Thus I and all my servants war against him night and day. Therefore I know now no good knight, nor no good man, but I get them on my side and I may. And for that I know that thou art a good knight, I beseech you to help me. And for ye be a fellow of the Round Table, wherefore ye ought not to fail no gentlewoman which is disherited, and she besought you of help.

Then Sir Percivale promised her all the help that he might. And then she thanked him. And at that time the 20 weather was hot, and then she called unto her a gentlewoman, and bad her bring forth a pavilion ; and so she did, and pight it upon the gravel. Sir, said she, now may ye rest you in this heat of the day. Then he thanked her, and she put off his helm and his shield, and there he slept a great while. And then he awoke, and asked her if she had any meat, and she said, Yea, also ye shall have enough ; and so there was set enough upon the table, and thereon so much that he had marvel, for there was all manner of meats that he could think on. Also he drank there the strongest 30 wine that ever he drank, him thought, and therewith he was a little heated more than he ought to be. With that he beheld the gentlewoman, and him thought that she was the fairest creature that ever he saw. And then Sir Percivale proffered her love, and prayed her that she would be his. Then she refused him in a manner when he required her, for the cause he should be the more ardent on her, and ever he

ceased not to pray her of love. And when she saw him well enchain'd, then she said, Sir Percivale, wit ye well, I shall not fulfil your will, but if ye swear from henceforth ye shall be my true servant, and to do nothing but that I shall command you: will ye ensure me this as ye be a true knight? Yea, said he, fair lady, by the faith of my body. Well, said she, now shall ye do with me whatso it please you, and now wit ye well that ye are the knight in the world that I have most desire to. And then Sir Percivale came near to her, to proffer her love, and by adventure and 10 grace he saw his sword lie upon the ground all naked, in whose pommel was a red cross, and the sign of the crucifix therein, and bethought him on his knighthood, and his promise made toforehand unto the good man. Then he made the sign of the cross in his forehead, and therewith the pavilion turned up so down, and then it changed unto a smoke and a black cloud, and then he was adread, and cried aloud,—

Fair sweet Father, Jesu Christ, ne let me not be shamed, the which was near lost had not thy good grace been! And 20 then he looked into a ship, and saw her enter therein, which said, Sir Percivale, ye have betrayed me. And so she went with the wind roaring and yelling, that it seemed that all the water burnt after her. Then Sir Percivale made great sorrow, and drew his sword unto him, saying, Sithen my flesh shall be my master, I shall punish it. And therewith he rove himself through the thigh, that the blood start about him, and said, O good Lord, take this in recompensation of that I have done against thee my lord. So then he clothed him and armed him, and called himself a wretch, saying, 30 How nigh was I lost! And then he stopped his bleeding wound with a piece of his shirt.

Thus as he made his moan, he saw the same ship come from the Orient that the good man was in the day before: and the noble knight was ashamed with himself, and therewith he fell in a swoon. And when he awoke

he went unto him weakly, and there he saluted this good man. And then he asked Sir Percivale, How hast thou done sith I departed? Sir, said he, here was a gentlewoman, and led me into deadly sin: and there he told him altogether. Knew ye not the maid? said the good man. Sir, said he, nay: but well I wot the fiend sent her hither to shame me. Oh, good knight, said he, thou art a fool, for that gentlewoman was the master fiend of hell, the which hath power above all devils, and that was the old  
 10 lady that thou sawest in thy vision riding on the serpent. Then he told Sir Percivale how our Lord Jesu Christ beat him out of heaven for his sin, the which was the most brightest angel of heaven, and therefore he lost his heritage, and that was the champion that thou foughtest withal, the which had overcome thee, had not the grace of God been: now beware, Sir Percivale, and take this for an ensample. And then the good man vanished away. Then Sir Percivale took his arms, and entered into the ship, and so departed from thence.

## CHAPTER V.

*Of Sir Gawaine and Sir Ector.*

20 When Sir Gawaine was departed from his fellowship, he rode long without any adventure. For he found not the tenth part of adventure as he was wont to do. For Sir Gawaine rode from Whitsunday unto Michaelmas, and found none adventure that pleased him. So on a day it befell Gawaine met with Sir Ector de Maris, and either made great joy of other, that it were marvel to tell. And so they told every each other, and complained them greatly that they could find none adventure.

*Sir Ga-  
waine and  
Sir Ector  
are weary  
of the  
Quest.*

30 Truly, said Sir Gawaine unto Sir Ector, I am nigh weary of this quest, and loth I am to follow further in strange countries. One thing marvelleth me, said Sir Ector, I have

met with twenty knights, fellows of mine, and all they complain as I do. I marvel, said Sir Gawaine, where that Sir Launcelot your brother is. Truly, said Sir Ector, I cannot hear of him, nor of Sir Galahad, Percivale, nor Sir Bors. Let them be, said Sir Gawaine, for they four have no peers. And if one thing were not in Sir Launcelot, he had no fellow of none earthly man; but he is as we be, but if he took more pain upon him. But and these four be met together, they will be loth that any man meet with them; for, and they fail of the Sancgreal, it is in waste of all the remnant 10 to recover it. Thus as Ector and Gawaine rode more than eight days. And on a Saturday they found an old chapel, the which was wasted that there seemed no man thither repaired, and there they alight, and set their spears at the door, and in they entered into the chapel, and there made their orisons a great while, and then set them down in the sieges of the chapel. And as they spake of one thing and other, for heaviness they fell on sleep, and there befell them both marvellous adventures.

Thus within a while both Gawaine and Ector awaked, and 20 either told other of their vision, the which marvelled them greatly. Truly, said Ector, I shall never be merry till I hear tidings of my brother Launcelot.

Now as they sat thus talking, they saw an hand shewing unto the elbow, and was covered with red samite, and upon that hung a bridle not rich, and held within the fist a great candle which burnt right clear, and so passed afore them, and entered into the chapel, and then vanished away, and they wist not where. And anon came down a voice which said, Knights full of evil faith and poor belief, these two 30 things have failed you, and therefore ye may not come to the adventures of the Sancgreal. Then first spake Gawaine and said, Ector, have ye heard these words? Yea truly, said Sir Ector, I heard all. Now go we, said Sir Ector, unto some hermit that will tell us of our vision, for it seemeth me we labour all in vain. And so they departed and rode into

*They see  
a Vision,*

a valley, and there met with a squire which rode on an hackney, and they saluted him fair. Sir, said Gawaine, can thou teach us to any hermit? Here is one in a little mountain, said the squire, but it is so rough that there may no horse go thither; and therefore ye must go on foot: there shall ye find a poor house, and there is Nacien the hermit, which is the holiest man in this country

*which is  
explained  
by Nacien,  
the hermit.*

Then departed Gawaine and Ector, and so rode till that they came unto the rough mountain, and there they tied their horses, and went on foot to the hermitage. And when they were come up, they saw a poor house, and beside the chapel a little courtlage, where Nacien the hermit gathered worts, as he which had tasted none other meat of a great while. And when he saw the errant knights, he came toward them and saluted them, and they him again. Fair lords, said he, what adventure brought you hither? Sir, said Gawaine, to speak with you, for to be confessed. Sir, said the hermit, I am ready. Then they told him so much that he wist well what they were, and then he  
20 thought to counsel them if he might. Then began Gawaine first, and told him of his vision that he had had in the chapel: and Ector told him all as it is afore rehearsed. Sir, said the hermit unto Sir Gawaine, now will I tell you what betokeneth the hand with the candle and the bridle; that is to understand the Holy Ghost, where charity is ever, and the bridle signifieth abstinence. For when she is bridled in christian man's heart, she holdeth him so short that he falleth not in deadly sin. And the candle which sheweth clearness and sight, signifieth the right way of Jesu Christ.  
30 And when he went, and said, Knights of poor faith and of wicked belief,—these three things failed, charity, abstinence, and truth, therefore ye may not attain that high adventure of the Sancgreal.

Certes, said Gawaine, soothly have ye said, that I see it openly. Now I pray you, good man and holy father, tell me why we met not with so many adventures as we were

wont to do, and commonly have the better. I shall tell you gladly, said the good man: The adventure of the Sancgreal, which ye and many other have undertaken the quest of it, and find it not, the cause is, for it appeareth not to sinners. Wherefore marvel not though ye fail thereof, and many other. For ye be an untrue knight, and a great murderer, and to good men signifieth other things than murder. For I dare say, as sinful as Sir Launcelot hath been, sith that he went into the quest of the Sancgreal he slew never man, nor nought shall till 10 that he come unto Camelot again. For he hath taken upon him for to forsake sin. And were not that he is not stable, but by his thought he is likely to turn again, he should be next to achieve it, save Galahad his son. But God knoweth his thought, and his unstableness, and yet shall he die right an holy man; and no doubt he hath no fellow of no earthly sinful man. Sir, said Gawaine, it seemeth me by your words, that for our sins it will not avail us to travail in this quest. Truly, said the good man, there be an hundred such as ye be, that never shall 20 prevail but to have shame. And when they had heard these voices, they commended him unto God.

Then the good man called Gawaine, and said, It is long time passed sith that ye were made knight, and never since thou servedst thy Maker, and now thou art so old a tree, that in thee there is neither life nor fruit; wherefore bethink thee that thou yield unto our Lord the bare rind, sith the fiend hath the leaves and the fruit. Sir, said Gawaine, and I had leisure I would speak with you, but my fellow here, Sir Ector, is gone, and abideth me 30 yonder beneath the hill. Well, said the good man, thou were better to be counselled. Then departed Gawaine, and came to Ector, and so took their horses, and rode till they came to a foster's house which harboured them right well. And on the morn they departed from their host, and rode long or they could find any adventure.

## CHAPTER VI.

*Of Sir Bors.*

*The religious man  
and the  
scarlet  
coat.*

When Bors was departed from Camelot, he met with a religious man riding on an ass, and Sir Bors saluted him. Anon the good man knew him that he was one of the knights errant that was in the quest of the Sancgreal. What are ye? said the good man. Sir, said he, I am a knight that fain would be counselled in the quest of the Sancgreal: for he shall have much earthly worship that may bring it to an end. Certes, said the good man, that is sooth, for he shall be the best knight of the world, and  
 10 the fairest of all the fellowship. But wit you well, there shall none attain it but by cleanness, that is, pure confession. So rode they together till that they came to an hermitage. And there he prayed Bors to dwell all that night with him: and so he alight, and put away his armour, and prayed him that he might be confessed; and so they went into the chapel, and there he was clean confessed: and they eat bread, and drank water, together. Now, said the good man, I pray thee that thou eat none other, till that thou sit at the table where the Sancgreal  
 20 shall be. Sir, said he, I agree me thereto; but how wit ye that I shall sit there? Yes, said the good man, that know I, but there shall be but few of your fellows with you. All is welcome, said Sir Bors, that God sendeth me. Also, said the good man, instead of a shirt, and in sign of chastisement, ye shall wear a garment; thereof I pray you do off all your clothes and your shirt, and so he did. And then he took him a scarlet coat, so that should be instead of his shirt, till he had fulfilled the quest of the Sancgreal. Then he armed him, and took his leave, and  
 30 so departed. So by evensong, by adventure he came to a strong tower, and an high, and there was he lodged gladly.

Upon the morn, as soon as the day appeared, Bors departed from thence, and so rode into a forest unto the hour of mid-day, and there befell him a marvellous adventure. So he met at the departing of the two ways two knights, that led Lionel his brother all naked, bounden upon a strong hackney, and his hands bounden tofore his breast: and every each of them held in his hand thorns, wherewith they went beating him so sore that the blood trailed down more than in an hundred places of his body, so that he was all blood tofore and behind, but he said 10 never a word, as he which was great of heart; he suffered all that ever they did to him as though he had felt none anguish. Anon Sir Bors dressed him to rescue him that was his brother: and so he looked upon the other side of him, and saw a knight which brought a fair gentlewoman, and would have set her in the thickest place of the forest, for to have been the more surer out of the way from them that sought him. And she, which was nothing assured, cried with an high voice, Saint Mary, succour your maid!

*Bors meets  
with his  
brother  
Lionel  
bound on a  
horse, and  
with a  
gentle-  
woman in  
distress.*

20

And anon she espied where Sir Bors came riding. And when she came nigh him, she deemed him a knight of the Round Table, whereof she hoped to have some comfort; and then she conjured him, by the faith that he owed unto Him in whose service thou art entered in, and for the faith ye owe unto the high order of knighthood, and for the noble king Arthur's sake, that I suppose that made thee knight, that thou help me, and suffer me not to be shamed of this knight!

When Bors heard her say thus, he had so much sorrow 30 there he nist not what to do. For if I let my brother be in adventure he must be slain, and that would I not for all the earth. And if I help not the maid, she is shamed for ever, and also she shall lose her honour, the which she shall never get again. Then lift he up his eyes, and said weeping, Fair sweet Lord Jesu Christ, whose



liege man I am, keep Lionel my brother, that these knights slay him not; and for pity of you, and for Mary's sake, I shall succour this maid.

*He rescues  
the gentle-  
woman.*

Then dressed he him unto the knight the which had the gentlewoman, and then he cried, Sir knight, let your hand off that maiden, or ye be but dead. And then he set down the maiden and was armed at all pieces, save he lacked his spear. Then he dressed his shield, and drew out his sword, and Bors smote him so hard that it went  
10 through his shield and habergeon on the left shoulder; and through great strength he beat him down to the earth; and at the pulling out of Bors' spear there he swooned.

Then came Bors to the maid, and said, How seemeth it you? Of this knight ye be delivered at this time. Now Sir, said she, I pray you lead me there as this knight had me.—So shall I do gladly: and took the horse of the wounded knight, and set the gentlewoman upon him, and so brought her as she desired. Sir knight, said she, ye have better sped than ye weened, for if ye had not saved  
20 me five hundred men should have died for it.—What knight was he that had you in the forest?—By my faith, said she, he is my cousin. So wot I never with what craft the fiend enchafed him, for yesterday he took me from my father privily; for I nor none of my father's men mistrusted him not. And if he had shamed me, he should have died for the sin, and his body shamed and dishonoured for ever. Thus as she stood talking with him, there came twelve knights seeking after her, and anon she told them all how Bors had delivered her; then they made  
30 great joy, and besought him to come to her father, a great lord, and he should be right welcome. Truly, said Bors, that may not be at this time, for I have a great adventure to do in this country. So he commended them unto God, and departed. Then Sir Bors rode after Lionel his brother by the trace of their horses. Thus he rode seeking a great while.

And then he rode all that day, and harboured with an old lady. And on the morn he rode to a castle in a valley, and there he met with a yeoman going a great pace toward a forest. Say me, said Sir Bors, canst thou tell me of any adventure? Sir, said he, here shall be under this castle a great and a marvellous tournament. Of what folks shall it be? said Sir Bors. The earl of Plains (said he) shall be on the one party, and the lady's nephew of Hervin on the other party. Then Bors thought to be there, if he might meet with his brother Sir Lionel, 10 or any other of his fellowship which were in the quest of the Sancgreal. And then he turned to an hermitage that was in the entry of the forest. And when he was come thither, he found there Sir Lionel his brother, which sat all armed at the entry of the chapel door, for to abide there harbour till on the morn that the tournament shall be. And when Sir Bors saw him he had great joy of him, that was it marvel to tell of his joy. And then he alight off his horse and said, Fair sweet brother, when came ye hither? Anon as Sir Lionel saw him he said, Ah Bors, 20 ye may not make none avaunt, but, as for you, I might have been slain; when ye saw two knights leading me away, beating me, ye left me to succour a gentlewoman, and suffered me in peril of death: for never erst ne did no brother to another so great an untruth. And for that misdeed now I ensure you but death, for well have ye deserved it; therefore keep thee from henceforward, and that shall ye find as soon as I am armed. When Sir Bors understood his brother's wrath, he kneeled down to the earth, and cried him mercy, holding up both his hands, 30 and prayed him to forgive him his evil will. Nay, said Lionel, that shall never be, and I may have the higher hand, that I make mine avow to God: thou shalt have death for it, for it were pity ye lived any longer.

Right so he went in, and took his harness, and mounted upon his horse, and came tofore him and said, Bors, keep

*Sir Lionel  
is wroth  
with Sir  
Bors,*

*and tries to  
slay him.*

thee from me, for I shall do to thee as I would to a felon or a traitor, for ye be the untruest knight that ever came out of so worthy an house as was king Bors de Ganis, which was our father; therefore start upon thy horse, and so shall ye be most at your advantage. And but if ye will, I will run upon thee there as ye stand upon foot, and as the shame shall be mine and the harm yours; but of that shame reck I nought. When Sir Bors saw that he must fight with his brother or else to die, he nist not what to  
10 do. Then his heart counselled him not thereto, in as much as Lionel was born or he, wherefore he ought to bear him reverence; yet kneeled he down afore Lionel's horse feet, and said, Fair sweet brother, have mercy upon me and slay me not, and have in remembrance the great love which ought to be between us twain. What Sir Bors said to Lionel he recked not, for the fiend had brought him in such a will that he should slay him. Then when Lionel saw he would none other, and that he would not have risen to give him battle, he rushed over him, so that  
20 he smote Bors with his horse feet upward to the earth, and hurt him so sore that he swooned of distress, the which he felt in himself to have died without confession. So when Lionel saw this, he alight off his horse, to have smitten off his head. And so he took him by the helm, and would have rent it from his head.

*The hermit  
interfering  
is slain.*

Then came the hermit running unto him, which was a good man and of great age, and well had he heard all the words that were between them, and so fell down upon Sir Bors. Then he said to Lionel, Ah, gentle knight, have  
30 mercy upon me and on thy brother, for if thou slay him thou shalt be dead of sin, and that were sorrowful; for he is one of the worthiest knights of the world, and of the best conditions. So God me help, said Lionel, Sir priest, but if ye flee from him I shall slay you, and he shall never the sooner be quit. Certes, said the good man, I had lever ye slay me than him, for my death shall not be

great harm, not half so much as of his. Well, said Lionel, I am agreed; and set his hand to his sword, and smote him so hard that his head went backward. Not for that he restrained him of his evil will, but took his brother by the helm, and unlaced it to have stricken off his head, and had slain him without fail, but so it happened, Colgrevice, a fellow of the Round Table, came at that time thither, as our Lord's will was. And when he saw the good man slain, he marvelled much what it might be. And then he beheld Lionel would have slain his brother, 10 and knew Sir Bors which he loved right well. Then start he down and took Lionel by the shoulders, and drew him strongly aback from Bors, and said, Lionel, will ye slay your brother, the worthiest knight of the world one? and that should no good man suffer. Why, said Sir Lionel, will ye let me? therefore if ye intermit you in this, I shall slay you, and him after. Why, said Colgrevice, is this sooth, that ye will slay him? Slay him will I, said he, who so say the contrary; for he hath done so much against me that he hath well deserved it; and so ran 20 upon him, and would have smitten him through the head; and Sir Colgrevice ran betwixt them and said, And ye be so hardly to do so more, we two shall meddle together. When Lionel understood his words, he took his shield afore him, and asked him what he was; and he told him, Colgrevice, one of his fellows.

*Sir Colgrevice comes to the rescue.*

Then Lionel defied him, and gave him a great stroke through the helm. Then he drew his sword, for he was a passing good knight, and defended him right manfully. So long endured the battle that Sir Bors 30 rose up all anguishly, and beheld Sir Colgrevice, the good knight, fight with his brother for his quarrel. Then was he full sorry and heavy, and thought, if Colgrevice slew him that was his brother, he should never have joy, and if his brother slew Colgrevice the shame should ever be his. Then would he have risen to

have departed them, but he had not so much might to stand on foot: so he abode him so long till Colgrevice had the worse, for Sir Lionel was of great chivalry and right hardy, for he had pierced the hauberk and the helm, that he abode but death. For he had lost much of his blood, that it was marvel that he might stand upright. Then beheld he Sir Bors, which sat dressing him upward, and said, Ah Bors, why come ye not to cast me out of peril of death, wherein I have put me to succour you,  
10 which were right now nigh the death? Certes, said Lionel, that shall not avail you, for none of you shall bear other's warrant, but that ye shall die both of my hand. When Bors heard that, he did so much he rose and put on his helm. Then perceived he first the hermit priest which was slain, then made he a marvellous sorrow upon him.

*but is  
slain also.*

Then oft Colgrevice cried upon Sir Bors, Why will ye let me die here for your sake? if it please you that I die for you the death, it will please me the better for to save a worthy man. With that word Sir Lionel smote  
20 off the helm from his head. Then Colgrevice saw that he might not escape; then he said, Fair sweet Jesu, that I have misdona have mercy upon my soul; for such sorrow that my heart suffereth for goodness, and for alms deed that I would have done here, be to me aligement of penance unto my soul's health. At these words Lionel smote him so sore that he bare him to the earth. So when he had slain Colgrevice, he ran upon his brother as a fiendly man, and gave him such a stroke that he made him stoop; and he, that was full of humility, prayed  
30 him, for God's love to leave this battle: For and it befell, fair brother, that I slew you, or ye me, we should be dead of that sin. Never God me help but if I have on you mercy, and I may have the better hand. Then drew Bors his sword, all weeping, and said, Fair brother, God knoweth mine intent. Ah, fair brother, ye have done full evil this day to slay such an holy priest, the which

never trespassed. Also ye have slain a gentle knight, and one of our fellows. And well wot ye that I am not afeard of you greatly, but I dread the wrath of God ; and this is an unkindly war, therefore God shew miracle upon us both. Now God have mercy upon me, though I defend my life against my brother. With that Bors lift up his hand, and would have smitten his brother.

And then he heard a voice that said, Flee, Bors, and touch him not, or else thou shalt slay him. Right so alight a cloud betwixt them in likeness of a fire, and a 10 marvellous flame, that both their two shields burnt. Then were they sore afraid, that they fell both to the earth, and lay there a great while in a swoon. And when they came to themselves, Bors saw that his brother had no harm · then he held up both his hands, for he dread God had taken vengeance upon him. With that he heard a voice say, Bors, go hence and bear thy brother no longer fellowship, but take thy way anon right to the sea, for Sir Percivale abideth thee there. Then he said to his brother, Fair sweet brother, forgive me, for God's love, 20 all that I have trespassed unto you. Then he answered, God forgive it thee, and I do gladly

So Sir Bors departed from him, and rode the next way to the sea. And at the last, by fortune he came to an abbey which was nigh the sea. That night Bors rested him there, and in his sleep there came a voice to him, and bad him go to the sea ; then he start up, and made a sign of the cross in the midst of his forehead, and took his harness, and made ready his horse, and mounted upon him. And at a broken wall he rode out, 30 and rode so long till that he came to the sea. And on the strand he found a ship covered all with white samite. And he alight, and betook him to Jesu Christ. And as soon as he entered into the ship, the ship departed into the sea, and went so fast that him seemed the ship went flying, but it was soon dark, so that

*Sir Bors is  
miracul-  
ously  
saved,*

*and de-  
parting,  
finds Sir  
Percivale  
on the ship*

he might know no man, and so he slept till it was day. Then he awaked, and saw in the midst of the ship a knight lie, all armed save his helm. Then knew he that it was Sir Percivale of Wales, and then he made of him right great joy. But Sir Percivale was abashed of him, and he asked him what he was. Ah, fair sir, said Bors, know ye me not? Certes, said he, I marvel how ye came hither, but if our Lord brought you hither himself: then Sir Bors smiled, and did off his helm. Then  
 10 Percivale knew him, and either made great joy of other, that it was marvel to hear. Then Bors told him how he came into the ship, and by whose admonishment. And either told other of their temptations, as ye have heard toforehand. So went they downward in the sea, one while backward another while forward, and every each comforted other, and oft were in their prayers. Then said Sir Percivale, We lack nothing but Galahad the good knight.

## CHAPTER VII.

*Of Sir Galahad, Sir Bors, and Sir Percivale, and of the Ship.*

*Sir Galahad overthrows Sir Gawaine at a tournament.*

Now saith this story, when Galahad had rescued Percivale from the twenty knights, he rode then into a vast forest, wherein he rode many journeys, and he found many adventures, the which he brought to an end, whereof the story maketh here no mention. Then he took his way to the sea on a day, and it befell as he passed by a castle where was a wonder tournament, but they without had done so much that they within were put to the worse, yet were they within good knights enough. When Galahad saw that those within were at so great a mischief that men slew them at the entry of the castle, then he thought to help them, and put a spear forth, and smote the first

that he fell to the earth, and the spear brake to pieces. Then he drew his sword, and smote there as they were thickest, and so he did wonderful deeds of arms, that all they marvelled. Then it happed that Gawaine and Sir Ector de Maris were with the knights without; but when they espied the white shield with the red cross, the one said to the other, Yonder is the good knight Sir Galahad the haut prince: now he should be a great fool which should meet with him to fight. So by adventure he came by Sir Gawaine, and he smote him so hard that he clave 10 his helm, and the coif of iron unto his head, so that Gawaine fell to the earth: but the stroke was so great, that it slanted down to the earth, and carved the horse shoulder in two. When Ector saw Gawaine down, he drew him aside, and thought it no wisdom for to abide him, and also for natural love, that he was his uncle. Thus through his great hardiness he beat aback all the knights without. And then they within came out and chased them all about. But when Galahad saw there would none turn again, he stole away privily, so that none wist where he was become. Now by my head, said Gawaine to Ector, now are the wonders true that were said of Launcelot du Lake, that the sword which stuck in the stone should give me such a buffet that I would not have it for the best castle in this world, and soothly now it is proved true, for never before had I such a stroke of man's hand. Sir, said Ector, me seemeth your quest is done. And yours is not done, said Gawaine, but mine is done; I shall seek no further. Then Gawaine was borne into a castle, and unarmed him, and laid him 30 in a rich bed, and a leech found that he might live, and to be whole within a month. Thus Gawaine and Ector abode together. For Sir Ector would not away till Gawaine were whole.

And the good knight Galahad rode so long till he came that night to the castle of Carboneck; and it

*A gentle-  
woman  
brings him  
to Sir Bors  
and Sir  
Percivale.*



befell him thus that he was benighted in an hermitage. So the good man was fain when he saw he was a knight errant. Then when they were at rest, there came a gentlewoman knocking at the door, and called Galahad, and so the good man came to the door to wit what she would. Then she called the hermit, Sir Ulfen, I am a gentlewoman that would speak with the knight that is with you. Then the good man awaked Galahad, and bad him arise, and speak with a gentlewoman that seemeth  
10 hath great need of you. Then Galahad went to her, and asked her what she would. Galahad, said she, I will that ye arm you, and mount upon your horse, and follow me, for I shall shew you within these three days the highest adventure that ever any knight saw. Anon Galahad armed him, and took his horse and commended him to God, and bad the gentlewoman go, and he would follow there as she liked.

So she rode as fast as her palfrey might bear her, till that she came to the sea the which was called Collibe.  
20 And at the night they came unto a castle in a valley, was closed with a running water, and with strong walls and high. And so she entered into the castle with Galahad, and there had he great cheer, for the lady of that castle was the damsel's lady. So when he was unarmed, then said the damsel, Madam, shall we abide here all this day? Nay, said she, but till he hath dined, and till he hath slept a little. So he eat and slept a while, till that the maid called him, and armed him by torchlight. And when the maid was horsed, and he both, the lady took  
30 Galahad a fair child and rich, and so they departed from the castle, till they came to the sea-side, and there they found the ship where Bors and Percivale were in, the which cried on the ship's board, Sir Galahad, ye be welcome, we have abiden you long. And when he heard them, he asked them what they were. Sir, said she, leave your horse here, and I shall leave mine; and took their saddles

and their bridles with them, and made a cross on them, and so entered into the ship. And the two knights received them both with great joy, and every each knew other. And so the wind arose, and drove them through the sea in a marvellous place. And within a while it dawned. Then did Galahad off his helm and his sword, and asked of his fellows from whence came that fair ship. Truly, said they, ye wot as well as we, but of God's grace. And then they told every each to other of all their hard adventures, and of their great temptation. Truly, 1C said Galahad, ye are much bounden to God, for ye have escaped great adventures. and had not the gentlewoman been I had not come here; for as for you, I wend never to have found you in these strange countries. Ah, Galahad, said Bors, if Launcelot your father were here, then were we well at ease, for then, me seemeth, we failed nothing. That may not be, said Galahad, but if it please our Lord.

By then the ship went from the land of Logris, and by adventure it arrived up betwixt two rocks passing great and marvellous, but there they might not land, for there 2C was a swallow of the sea, save there was another ship, and upon it they might go without danger. Go we thither, said the gentlewoman, and there shall we see adventures, for so is our Lord's will. And when they came thither, they found the ship rich enough, but they found neither man nor woman therein. But they found in the end of the ship two fair letters written, which said a dreadful word and a marvellous: Thou man which shall enter into this ship, beware thou be in steadfast belief, for I am Faith; and therefore beware how thou enterest, 3C for and thou fail I shall not help thee. Then said the gentlewoman, Percivale, wot ye what I am? Certes, said he, nay, to my witting. Wit you well, said she, that I am thy sister, which am daughter of king Pellinore. And therefore wit ye well ye are the man in the world that I most love. And if ye be not in perfect belief

of Jesu Christ, enter not in no manner of wise, for then should ye perish in the ship, for he is so perfect he will suffer no sin in him. When Percivale understood that she was his very sister, he was inwardly glad, and said, Fair sister, I shall enter therein, for if I be a mis-creature, or an untrue knight, there shall I perish.

*The wonders of the ship. The sword.*

In the mean while Galahad blessed him and entered therein, and then next the gentlewoman, and then Sir Bors and Sir Percivale. And when they were therein, it  
10 was so marvellous fair and rich that they marvelled. And in the midst of the ship was a fair bed, and Sir Galahad went thereto, and found there a crown of silk. And at the feet was a sword rich and fair, and it was drawn out of the sheath half a foot and more, and the sword was of divers fashions, and the pommel was of stone, and there was in him all manner of colours that any man might find, and every each of the colours had divers virtues, and the scales of the haft were of two ribs of divers  
20 beasts. The one beast was a serpent, which was conversant in Calidone, and is called the serpent of the fiend. And the bone of him is of such a virtue, that there is no hand that handleth him shall never be weary nor hurt: and the other beast is a fish, which is not right great, and haunteth the flood of Euphrates; and that fish is called Ertanax, and his bones be of such a manner of kind, that who that handleth them shall have so much will that he shall never be weary, and he shall not think on joy nor sorrow that he hath had, but only that thing that he beholdeth before him. And as for this sword there shall  
30 never man begripe it at the handle but one, but he shall pass all other. In the name of God, said Percivale, I shall essay to handle it. So he set his hand to the sword, but he might not begripe it. By my faith, said he, now have I failed. Bors set his hand thereto and failed. Then Galahad beheld the sword, and saw the letters like blood, that said, Let see who shall assay to draw me out of my

sheath, but if he be more hardier than other, and who that draweth me, wit ye well that he shall never fail of shame of his body, or to be wounded to the death. By my faith, said Galahad, I would draw this sword out of the sheath, but the offending is so great, that I shall not set my hand thereto. Now sir, said the gentlewoman, wit ye well that the drawing of this sword is forbidden to all men, save all only unto you.

And then beheld they the scabbard; it seemed to be of a serpent's skin. And thereon were letters of gold and silver. And the girdle was but poorly to come to, and not able to sustain such a rich sword, and the letters said: He which shall wield me, ought to be more harder than any other, if he bear me as truly as I ought to be borne. For the body of him which I ought to hang by, he shall not be shamed in no place while he is gird with this girdle, nor never none be so hardy to do away this girdle for it ought not to be done away, but by the hands of a maid, and that she be a king's daughter, and queen's, and she must be a maid all the days of her life, both in will and in deed; and if she break her virginity, she shall die the most villainous death that ever did any woman. Sir, said Percivale, turn this sword, that we may see what is on the other side. And it was red as blood, with black letters as any coal, which said, He that shall praise me most, most shall he find me to blame at a great need, and to whom I should be most debonair shall I be most felon, and that shall be at one time.

Sir, said she, there was a king that hight Pelles the maimed king. And while he might ride, he supported much Christendom, and holy Church. So upon a day he hunted in a wood of his which lasted unto the sea, and at the last he lost his hounds and his knights, save only one: and there he and his knight went till that they came toward Ireland, and there he found the ship. And when he saw the letters and understood them, yet he

*The  
scabbard.*

*Of Pelles,  
the maimed  
king.*

entered, for he was right perfect of his life: but his knight had none hardiness to enter, and there found he this sword, and drew it out as much as ye may see. So therewith entered a spear, wherewith he was smitten him through both the thighs, and never sith might he be healed, nor nought shall tofore we come to him. Thus, said she, was king Pelles, your grandsire, maimed for his hardiness. In the name of God, damsel, said Galahad.

*The girdles  
to the  
sword.*

- Now, said Galahad, where shall we find the gentle  
10 woman that shall make new girdles to the sword. Fair sir, said Percivale's sister, dismay you not, for by the leave of God I shall let make a girdle to the sword, such one as shall belong thereto. And then she opened a box, and took out girdles which were seemly wrought with golden threads, and upon that were set full precious stones, and a rich buckle of gold. Lo lords, said she, here is a girdle that ought to be set about the sword. And wit ye well the greatest part of this girdle was made of my hair, which I loved well while that I was a woman of the  
20 world. But as soon as I wist that this adventure was ordained me, I clipped off my hair and made this girdle in the name of God. Ye be well found, said Sir Bors, for certes you have put us out of great pain, wherein we should have entered ne had your tidings been. Then went the gentlewoman and set it on the girdle of the sword. Now, said the fellowship, what is the name of the sword, and what shall we call it? Truly, said she, the name of the sword is, the sword with the strange girdles, and the sheath, mover of blood; for no man that hath blood in  
30 him shall never see the one part of the sheath which was made of the tree of life.

*Sir Gala-  
had is girt  
with the  
sword.*

Then they said to Galahad, In the name of Jesu Christ, and pray you that ye gird you with this sword, which hath been desired so much in the realm of Logris. Now let me begin, said Galahad, to gripe this sword for to give you courage: but wit ye well it belongeth no

more to me then it doth to you. And then he griped about it with his fingers a great deal. And then she girt him about the middle with the sword:—Now reck I not though I die, for now I hold me one of the blessed maidens of the world, which hath made the worthiest knight of the world. Damsel, said Galahad, ye have done so much that I shall be your knight all the days of my life. Then they went from that ship, and went to the other. And anon the wind drove them into the sea a great pace, but they had no victual: but it 10 befell that they came on the morn to a castle that men call Carteloise, that was in the marches of Scotland.

Right so departed the three knights, and Percivale's sister with them. And so they came to a castle, and passed by. So there came a knight armed after them, and said, Lords, hark what I shall say to you. This gentlewoman that ye lead with you is a maid? Sir, said she, a maid I am. Then he took her by the bridle and said, By the holy cross ye shall not escape me tofore ye have yelden the custom of this castle. Let her 20 go, said Percivale; ye be not wise, for a maid in what place she cometh is free. So in the meanwhile there came out a ten or twelve knights armed, out of the castle, and with them came gentlewomen which held a dish of silver, and then they said, This gentlewoman must yield us the custom of this castle. Sir, said a knight, what maid passeth hereby shall give this dish full of blood of her right arm. Blame have ye, said Galahad, that brought up such customs, and I ensure you of this gentlewoman ye shall fail while that I live. Truly, said Sir Percivale, I had lever be slain. 30 And I also, said Sir Bors. By my truth, said the knight, then shall ye die, for ye may not endure against us, though ye were the best knights of the world.

Then let them run each to other, and the three fellows beat the ten knights, and then set their hands to their swords, and beat them down and slew them. Then there

*A knight demands that they should yield the custom of the castle.*

*The battle.*

- came out of the castle well a threescore knights armed. Fair lords, said the three fellows, have mercy upon yourselves, and have not ado with us. Nay, fair lords, said the knights of the castle, we counsel you to withdraw you, for ye are the best knights of the world, and therefore do no more, for ye have done enough. We will let you go with this harm, but we must needs have the custom. Certes, said Galahad, for nought speak ye. Well, said they, will ye die? We be not yet come thereto, said Galahad. Then  
10 began they to meddle together, and Galahad drew his sword with the strange girdles, and smote on the right hand and on the left hand, and slew what that ever abode him, and did such marvels that there was none that saw him but they wend he had been none earthly man but a monster. And his two fellows halp him passing well, and so they held the journey every each in like hard, till it was night. Then must they needs part. So came a good knight and said to the three fellows, If ye will come in to night, and take such harbour as here is, ye shall  
20 be right welcome, and we shall ensure you by the faith of our bodies, as we are true knights, to leave you in such estate to-morrow as we find you, without any falsehood. And as soon as ye know of the custom we dare say ye will accord. Therefore, for God's love, said the gentlewoman, go thither, and spare not for me. Go we, said Galahad, and so they entered into the castle. And when they were alight, they made great joy of them. So within a while the three knights asked the custom of the castle, and wherefore it was. What it is, said they,  
30 we will say you sooth.

*Sir Perci-  
vale's sister  
fulfils the  
custom and  
dies.*

There is in this castle a gentlewoman which we and this castle is hers, and many other. So it befell many years ago there fell upon her a malady. And when she had lain a great while, she fell unto a mesel, and of no leech she could have no remedy. But at the last an old man said, and she might have a dish full of blood of a

maid and a clean virgin in will and in work, and a king's daughter, that blood should be her health, and for to anoint her withal: and for this thing was this custom made. Now, said Percivale's sister, Fair knights, I see well that this gentlewoman is but dead. Certes, said Galahad, and if ye bleed so much, ye may die. Truly, said she, and I die for to heal her, I shall get me great worship and soul's health, and worship to my lineage, and better is one harm than twain. And therefore there shall be no more battle, but to-morn I shall yield you your 10 custom of this castle. And then there was great joy, more than there was tofore. For else had there been mortal war upon the morn; notwithstanding she would none other, whether they would or nold.

That night were the three fellows eased with the best, and on the morn they heard mass, and Sir Percivale's sister bad bring forth the sick lady. So she was, the which was evil at ease. Then said she, Who shall let me blood? So one came forth and let her blood, and she bled so much that the dish was full. Then she lift 20 up her hand and blessed her. And then she said to the lady, Madam, I am come to the death, for to make you whole; for God's love pray for me. With that she fell in a swoon. Then Galahad and his two fellows start up to her, and lift her up, and stanchd her, but she had bled so much that she might not live. Then she said, when she was awaked, Fair brother Percivale, I die for the healing of this lady. So I require you that ye bury not me in this country, but as soon as I am dead put me in a boat at the next haven, and let me go as adventure 30 will lead me; and as soon as ye three come to the city of Sarras, there to achieve the holy Graile, ye shall find me under a tower arrived, and there bury me in the spiritual place, for I say you so much, there Galahad shall be buried, and ye also, in the same place. Then Percivale understood these words, and granted it her, weeping. And



then said a voice, Lords and fellows, to-morrow at the hour of prime ye three shall depart every each from other, till the adventure bring you to the maimed king. Then asked she her Saviour, and as soon as she had received him the soul departed from the body. So the same day was the lady healed, when she was anointed withal. Then Sir Percivale made a letter of all that she had holpen them as in strange adventures, and put it in her right hand, and so laid her in a barge, and covered it with black silk; and  
 10 so the wind arose, and drove the barge from the land, and all knights beheld it, till it was out of their sight.

*Sir Bors  
and the  
wounded  
knight.*

Then they drew all to the castle, and so forthwith there fell a sudden tempest, and a thunder, lightning, and rain, as all the earth would have broken. So half the castle turned up so down. So it passed evensong or the tempest was ceased. Then they saw afore them a knight armed and wounded hard in the body and in the head, that said, Oh God, succour me, for now it is need! After this knight came another knight and a dwarf which cried  
 20 to them afar, Stand, ye may not escape. Then the wounded knight held up his hands to God, that he should not die in such tribulation. Truly, said Galahad, I shall succour him for His sake that he calleth upon. Sir, said Bors, I shall do it, for it is not for you, for he is but one knight. Sir, said he, I grant. So Sir Bors took his horse, and commended him to God, and rode after to rescue the wounded knight.

Now turn we to the two fellows.

*The tomb  
of the  
maidens.*

Now saith the story that all night Galahad and Percivale  
 30 were in a chapel in their prayers, for to save Sir Bors. So on the morrow they dressed them in their harness toward the castle, to wit what was fallen of them therein. And when they came there, they found neither man nor woman that he ne was dead by the vengeance of our Lord. With that they heard a voice that said, This vengeance is for blood shedding of maidens. Also they found at the

end of the chapel a churchyard, and therein might they see a threescore fair tombs, and that place was so fair and so delectable that it seemed them there had been none tempest. For there lay the bodies of all the good maidens which were martyred for the sick lady's sake. Also they found the names of every each, and of what blood they were come, and all were of kings' blood, and twelve of them were kings' daughters. Then they departed, and went into a forest. Now, said Percivale unto Galahad, we must depart ; so pray we our Lord that we may meet together in short time. 10 Then they did off their helms, and kissed together, and wept at their departing.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### *Of Sir Launcelot.*

Now saith the history, that when Launcelot was come to the water of Mortoise, as it is rehearsed before, he was in great peril, and so he laid him down and slept, and took the adventure that God would send him.

So when he was asleep, there came a vision unto him and said, Launcelot, arise up, and take thine armour, and enter into the first ship that thou shalt find. And when he had heard these words, he start up and saw great clearness 20 about him. And then he lift up his hand and blessed him, and so took his arms, and made him ready ; and so by adventure he came by a strand, and found a ship, the which was without sail or oar. And as soon as he was within the ship, there he felt the most sweetness that ever he felt ; and he was fulfilled with all thing that he thought on or desired. Then said he, Fair sweet Father Jesu Christ, I wot not in what joy I am, for this joy passeth all earthly joys that ever I was in. And so in this joy he laid him down to the ship's board, and slept till day. And when he awoke, 30

*Sir Launcelot enters the ship where Sir Percivale's sister lay dead,*

he found there a fair bed, and therein lying a gentlewoman dead, the which was Sir Percivale's sister. And as Launcelot devised her, he espied in her right hand a writ, the which he read, the which told him all the adventures that ye have heard tofore, and of what lineage she was come. So with this gentlewoman Sir Launcelot was a month and more. If ye would ask how he lived, He that fed the people of Israel with manna in the desert, so was he fed. For every day, when he had said his prayers, he was sustained  
10 with the grace of the Holy Ghost.

*and meets  
with Gala-  
had, his  
son.*

So on a night he went to play him by the water side, for he was somewhat weary of the ship. And then he listened, and heard an horse come, and one riding upon him. And when he came nigh he seemed a knight. And so he let him pass, and went there as the ship was, and there he alight, and took the saddle and the bridle and put the horse from him, and went into the ship. And then Launcelot dressed unto him and said, Ye be welcome. And he answered and saluted him again, and  
20 asked him, What is your name? for much my heart giveth unto you. Truly, said he, my name is Launcelot du Lake. Sir, said he, then be ye welcome, for ye were the beginner of me in this world. Ah, said he, are ye Galahad? Yea forsooth, said he. And so he kneeled down and asked him his blessing, and after took off his helm and kissed him. And there was great joy between them, for there is no tongue can tell the joy that they made either of other, and many a friendly word spoken between, as kind would, the which is no need here to be rehearsed. And there every each told  
30 other of their adventures and marvels that were befallen to them in many journeys, sith that they departed from the court. Anon as Galahad saw the gentlewoman dead in the bed, he knew her well enough, and told great worship of her, and that she was the best maid living, and it was great pity of her death. But when Launcelot heard how the marvellous sword was gotten, and who made it, and

all the marvels rehearsed afore, then he prayed Galahad his son that he would shew him the sword, and so he did. And anon he kissed the pommel, and the hilts, and the scabbard. Truly, said Launcelot, never erst knew I of so high adventures done, and so marvellous and strange. So dwelled Launcelot and Galahad within that ship half a year, and served God daily and nightly with all their power. And often they arrived in isles far from folk, where there repaired none but wild beasts; and there they found many strange adventures and perilous, which 10 they brought to an end. But because the adventures were with wild beasts, and not in the quest of the Sancgreall, therefore the tale maketh here no mention thereof, for it would be too long to tell of all those adventures that befell them.

So after, on a Monday, it befell that they arrived in the edge of a forest, tofore a cross, and then saw they a knight, armed all in white, and was richly horsed, and led in his right hand a white horse. And so he came to the ship, and saluted the two knights on the high Lord's 20 behalf, and said, Galahad, sir, ye have been long enough with your father, come out of the ship, and start upon this horse, and go where the adventures shall lead thee in the quest of the Sancgreall. Then he went to his father, and kissed him sweetly, and said, Fair sweet father, I wot not when I shall see you more, till I see the body of Jesu Christ. I pray you, said Launcelot, pray ye to the high Father that He hold me in his service. And so he took his horse; and there they heard a voice, that said, Think for to do well, for the one shall never see 30 the other before the dreadful day of doom. Now, son Galahad, said Launcelot, since we shall depart, and never see other, I pray to the high Father to preserve both me and you both. Sir, said Galahad, no prayer availeth so much as yours. And therewith Galahad entered into the forest. And the wind arose, and drove Launcelot

*Galahad  
takes leave  
of Sir  
Launcelot.*

more than a month throughout the sea, where he slept but little, but prayed to God that he might see some tidings of the Sancgreal.

*Launcelot  
enters the  
castle of  
Carbonek.*

So it befell on a night, at midnight he arrived afore a castle, on the back side, which was rich and fair. And there was a postern opened towards the sea, and was open without any keeping, save two lions kept the entry; and the moon shone clear. Anon Sir Launcelot heard a voice that said, Launcelot, go out of this  
10 ship, and enter into the castle, where thou shalt see a great part of thy desire. Then he ran to his arms, and so armed him, and so he went to the gate, and saw the lions. Then set he hand to his sword, and drew it. Then there came a dwarf suddenly, and smote him on the arm so sore that the sword fell out of his hand. Then heard he a voice say, Oh man of evil faith and poor belief, wherefore trowest thou more on thy harness than in thy Maker? for He might more avail thee than thine armour, in whose service thou art set. Then said Launce-  
20 lot, Fair Father Jesu Christ, I thank thee of thy great mercy, that thou reprovest me of my misdeed. Now see I well that ye hold me for your servant. Then took he again his sword, and put it up in his sheath, and made a cross in his forehead, and came to the lions, and they made semblant to do him harm. Notwithstanding he passed by them without hurt, and entered into the castle to the chief fortress, and there were they all at rest. Then Launcelot entered in so armed, for he found no gate nor door but it was open. And at the last he found a chamber  
30 whereof the door was shut, and he set his hand thereto to have opened it, but he might not.

*The Sanc-  
greal.*

Then he enforced him mickle to undo the door. Then he listened, and heard a voice which sang so sweetly that it seemed none earthly thing; and him thought the voice said, Joy and honour be to the Father of Heaven! Then Launcelot kneeled down tofore the chamber, for well wist

he that there was the Sancgreal within that chamber. Then said he, Fair sweet Father Jesu Christ, if ever I did thing that pleased the Lord, for thy pity have me not in despite for my sins done aforetime, and that thou shew me something of that I seek! And with that he saw the chamber door open, and there came out a great clearness, that the house was as bright as all the torches of the world had been there. So came he to the chamber door, and would have entered. And anon a voice said to him, Flee Launcelot, and enter not, for thou oughtest not 10 to do it: and if thou enter thou shalt forthink it. Then he withdrew him aback right heavy. Then looked he up in the midst of the chamber, and saw a table of silver, and the holy vessel covered with red samite, and many angels about it, whereof one held a candle of wax burning, and the other held a cross, and the ornaments of an altar. And before the holy vessel he saw a good man clothed as a priest, and it seemed that he was at the sacring of the mass. And it seemed to Launcelot that above the priest's hands there were three men, whereof the two 20 put the youngest by likeness between the priest's hands, and so he lift it up right high, and it seemed to shew so to the people. And then Launcelot marvelled not a little, for him thought that the priest was so greatly charged of the figure, that him seemed that he should fall to the earth. And when he saw none about him that would help him, then came he to the door a great pace, and said, Fair Father Jesu Christ, ne take it for no sin though I help the good man, which hath great need of help.

Right so entered he into the chamber, and came toward 30 the table of silver; and when he came nigh he felt a breath that him thought it was intermeddled with fire, which smote him so sore in the visage that him thought it burnt his visage; and therewith he fell to the earth, and had no power to arise, as he that was so araged that had lost the power of his body, and his hearing, and his

*Sir Launcelot swoons at the sight.*

saying. Then felt he many hands about him, which took him up and bare him out of the chamber door, without any amending of his swoon, and left him there seeming dead to all people. So upon the morrow, when it was fair day, they within were arisen, and found Launcelot lying afore the chamber door. All they marvelled how that he came in. And so they looked upon him, and felt his pulse, to wit whether there were any life in him; and so they found life in him, but he might neither stand,  
10 nor stir no member that he had; and so they took him by every part of the body, and bare him into a chamber, and laid him in a rich bed, far from all folk, and so he lay four days. Then the one said he was on live, and the other said nay. In the name of God, said an old man, for I do you verily to wit he is not dead, but he is so full of life as the mightiest of you, all, and therefore I counsel you that he be well kept till God send him life again.

In such manner they kept Launcelot four and twenty days,  
20 and also many nights, that ever he lay still as a dead man; and at the twenty-fifth day befell him after mid-day that he opened his eyes. And when he saw folk he made great sorrow and said, Why have ye awaked me? for I was more at ease than I am now. Oh Jesu Christ, who might be so blessed that might see openly thy great marvels of secretness there where no sinner may be. What have ye seen? said they about him. I have seen, said he, so great marvels that no tongue may tell, and more than any heart can think, and had not my son been here  
30 afore me I had seen much more. Then they told him how he had lain there four and twenty days and nights. Then him thought it was punishment for the twenty-four years that he had been a sinner, wherefore our Lord put him in penance four and twenty days and nights. Then looked Sir Launcelot before him, and saw the hair which he had borne nigh a year, for that he forethought

him right much that he had broken his promise unto the hermit, which he had avowed to do. Then they asked him how it stood with him. Forsooth, said he, I am whole of body, thanked be our Lord; therefore, sirs, for God's love tell me where that I am? Then said they all that he was in the castle of Carbonek. Therewith came a gentlewoman, and brought him a shirt of small linen cloth, but he changed not there, but took the hair to him again. Sir, said they, the quest of the Sancgreall is achieved right now in you, that never shall ye see of the Sancgreall 10 no more than ye have seen. Now I thank God, said Launcelot, of His great mercy, of that I have seen, for it sufficeth me, for, as I suppose, no man in this world hath lived better than I have done to achieve that I have done. And therewith he took the hair, and clothed him in it, and above that he put a linen shirt, and after a robe of scarlet, fresh and new. And when he was so arrayed, they marvelled all, for they knew him that he was Launcelot, the good knight. And then they said all, O my lord Sir Launcelot, be that ye? And he said, 20 Truly I am he. So the king held him there four days. And on the morrow he took his leave at king Pelles, and at all the fellowship that were there, and thanked them of the great labour.

So Sir Launcelot departed, and took his armour, and said that he would go see the realm of Logris—which I have not seen in a twelvemonth. And therewith commended the king to God, and so rode through many realms. And at the last he came to a white abbey, and there they made him that night great cheer. And on the morn he turned unto 30 Camelot, where he found king Arthur and the queen. But many of the knights of the Round Table were slain and destroyed, more than half. And so three were come home, Ector, Gawaine, and Lionel, and many other that need not to be rehearsed. And all the court was passing glad of Sir Launcelot; and the king asked him many tidings of his son

*Sir Launcelot returns to Camelot.*



Galahad. And there Launcelot told the king of his adventures that had befallen him since he departed. And also he told him of the adventures of Galahad, Percivale, and Bors, which that he knew by the letter of the dead damsel, and as Galahad had told him. Now, God would, said the king, that they were all three here. That shall never be, said Launcelot, for two of them shall ye never see, but one of them shall come again.

Now leave we this story, and speak we of Galahad.

## CHAPTER IX.

*How the Quest was achieved.*

*Sir Galahad meets with Sir Percivale and Sir Bors.*

10 Now saith the story that Galahad rode many journeys in vain.

And so he rode five days till that he came to the maimed king, and ever followed Percivale the five days, asking where he had been, and so one told him how the adventures of Logris were achieved. So on a day it befell that they came out of a great forest, and there they met at travers with Sir Bors, the which rode alone. It is no need to tell if they were glad, and then he saluted, and they yielded him honour and good adventure; and every each told other.

20 Then said Bors, It is more than a year and a half that I ne lay ten times where men dwelled, but in wild forests and in mountains, but God was ever my comfort.

*They come to the castle of Carbonek.*

Then rode they a great while till that they came to the castle of Carbonek. And when they were entered within the castle king Pelles knew them. Then there was great joy, for they wist well by their coming that they had fulfilled the quest of the Sancgreal. And anon alight a voice among them, and said, They that ought not to sit at the table of Jesu Christ arise, for now shall very knights be

30 fed. So they went thence all save king Pelles and Eliazar

his son, the which were holy men, and a maid which was his niece. And so these three fellows and they three were there; no more. Therewith a voice said, There be two among you that be not in the quest of the Sancgreall, and therefore depart ye. Then king Pelles and his son departed.

And therewithal beseemed them that there came a man and four angels from heaven, clothed in likeness of a bishop, and had a cross in his hand, and these four angels bare him up in a chair, and set him down before 10 the table of silver whereupon the Sancgreall was, and it seemed that he had in midst of his forehead letters that said, See ye here Joseph the first bishop of Christendom, the same which our Lord succoured in the city of Sarra, in the spiritual place. Then the knights marvelled, for that bishop was dead more than three hundred year tofore. Oh knights, said he, marvel not, for I was sometime an earthly man. With that they heard the chamber door open, and there they saw angels, and two bare candles of wax, and the third a towel, and the fourth a 20 spear which bled marvellously, that three drops fell within a box which he held with his other hand. And they set the candles upon the table, and the third the towel upon the vessel, and the fourth the holy spear even upright upon the vessel. And then the bishop made semblant as though he would have gone to the sacring of the mass. And then he took an ubby, which was made in likeness of bread; and at the lifting up there came a figure in likeness of a child, and the visage was as red and as bright as any fire, and smote himself into the bread, so that they all saw it, that the 30 bread was formed of a fleshly man, and then he put it into the holy vessel again. And then he did that longed to a priest to do to a mass. And then he went to Galahad and kissed him, and bad him go and kiss his fellows, and so he did anon. Now, said he, servants of Jesu Christ, ye shall be fed afore this table with sweet meats, that never knights tasted.

*Joseph  
and the  
Sancgreall*

And when he had said, he vanished away ; and they set them at the table in great dread, and made their prayers.

- Then looked they, and saw a man come out of the holy vessel, that had all the signs of the passion of Jesu Christ, bleeding all openly, and said, My knights and my servants and my true children, which be come out of deadly life into spiritual life, I will now no longer hide me from you, but ye shall see now a part of my secrets and of my hid things :
- 10 now hold and receive the high meat which ye have so much desired. Then took he himself the holy vessel, and came to Galahad, and he kneeled down and there he received his Saviour, and after him so received all his fellows ; and they thought it so sweet that it was marvellous to tell. Then said he to Galahad, Son, wotest thou what I hold betwixt my hands ? Nay, said he, but if ye will tell me. This is, said he, the holy dish wherein I ate the lamb on Sher-thursday. And now hast thou seen that thou most desiredst to see, but yet hast thou not seen it so openly as thou shalt
- 20 see it in the city of Sarras, in the spiritual place. Therefore thou must go hence, and bear with thee this holy vessel, for this night it shall depart from the realm of Logris, that it shall never be seen more here, and wotest thou wherefore ? for he is not served nor worshipped to his right, by them of this land, for they be turned to evil living, therefore I shall disherit them of the honour which I have done them. And therefore go ye three to-morrow unto the sea, where ye shall find your ship ready, and with you take the sword with the strange girdles, and no more with you, but Sir
- 30 Percivale and Sir Bors. Also I will that ye take with you of the blood of this spear, for to anoint the maimed king, both his legs and all his body, and he shall have his health. Sir, said Galahad, why shall not these other fellows go with us ?—For this cause, for right as I departed mine apostles, one here and another there, so I will that ye depart. And two of you shall die in my service, but one of you shall come

again, and tell tidings. Then gave he them his blessing and vanished away.

And Galahad went anon to the spear which lay upon the table, and touched the blood with his fingers, and came after to the maimed king, and anointed his legs. And therewith he clothed him anon, and start upon his feet out of his bed as an whole man, and thanked our Lord that he had healed him. And that was not to the world ward, for anon he yield him to a place of religion of white monks, and was a full holy man. That same night, about midnight came a 10 voice among them; which said, My sons and not my chieftains, my friends and not my warriors, go ye hence, where ye hope best to do, and as I bad you.—Ah, thanked be thou, Lord, that thou wilt vouchsafe to call us thy sinners. Now may we well prove that we have not lost our pains.

*Sir  
Galahad  
anoints the  
maimed  
king.*

Right so departed Galahad, Percivale, and Bors with him. And so they rode three days, and then they came to a rivage, and found the ship whereof the tale speaketh of tofore. And when they came to the board, they found in the midst the table of silver which they had left 20 with the maimed king, and the Sancgreal, which was covered with red samite. Then were they glad to have such things in their fellowship, and so they entered, and made great reverence thereto, and Galahad fell in his prayer long time to our Lord, that, at what time he asked, that he should pass out of this world: so much he prayed, till a voice said to him, Galahad, thou shalt have thy request, and when thou askest the death of thy body thou shalt have it, and then shalt thou find the life of the soul. Percivale heard this, and prayed him of fellow- 30 ship that was between them, to tell him wherefore he asked such things. That shall I tell you, said Galahad: the other day when we saw a part of the adventures of the Sancgreal, I was in such a joy of heart that I trow never man was that was earthly, and therefore I wot well when my body is dead my soul shall be in great joy to see the blessed Trinity every

*The three  
knights  
depart,*

day, and the majesty of our Lord Jesu Christ. So long were they in the ship that they said to Galahad, Sir, in this bed ought ye to lie, for so saith the scripture. And so he laid him down and slept a great while.

*and come  
to Sarra's.*

And when he awaked he looked afore him, and saw the city of Sarra's. And as they would have landed, they saw the ship wherein Percivale had put his sister in. Truly, said Percivale, in the name of God, well hath my sister holden us covenant. Then took they out  
10 of the ship the table of silver, and he took it to Percivale and to Bors to go tofore, and Galahad came behind, and right so they went to the city, and at the gate of the city they saw an old man crooked. Then Galahad called him, and bad him help to bear this heavy thing. Truly, said the old man, it is ten year ago that I might not go but with crutches. Care thou not, said Galahad, and arise up and shew thy good will. And so he assayed, and found himself as whole as ever he was. Then ran he to the table, and took one part against Galahad. And anon arose  
20 there great noise in the city, that a cripple was made whole by knights marvellous that entered into the city. Then anon after, the three knights went to the water, and brought up into the palace Percivale's sister, and buried her as richly as a king's daughter ought to be. And when the king of the city, which was cleped Estoraue, saw the fellowship, he asked them of whence they were, and what thing it was that they had brought upon the table of silver. And they told him the truth of the Sancgreal, and the power which that God had set there. Then the king was a  
30 tyrant, and was come of the line of paynims, and took them, and put them in prison in a deep hole.

But as soon as they were there, our Lord sent them the Sancgreal, through whose grace they were alway fulfilled while that they were in prison. So at the year's end it befell that this king Estoraue lay sick, and felt that he should die. Then he sent for the three knights, and they

came afore him, and he cried them mercy of that he had done to them, and they forgave it him goodly, and he died anon. When the king was dead, all the city was dismayed, and wist not who might be their king. Right so as they were in counsel, there came a voice among them, and bad them choose the youngest knight of them three to be their king, for he shall well maintain you and all yours. So they made Galahad king by all the assent of the whole city, and else they would have slain him. And when he was come to behold the land, he let make about the table of silver a 10 chest of gold and of precious stones that covered the holy vessel, and every day early the three fellows would come afore it and make their prayers.

Now at the year's end, and the self day after Galahad had borne the crown of gold, he arose up early, and his fellows, and came to the palace, and saw tofore them the holy vessel, and a man kneeling on his knees, in likeness of a bishop, that had about him a great fellowship of angels, as it had been Jesu Christ himself. And then he arose and began a mass of Our Lady. And 20 when he came to the sacrament of the mass, and had done, anon he called Galahad, and said to him, Come forth, the servant of Jesu Christ, and thou shalt see that thou hast much desired to see. And then he began to tremble right hard, when the deadly flesh began to behold the spiritual things. Then he held up his hands toward heaven, and said, Lord, I thank thee, for now I see that that hath been my desire many a day. Now, blessed Lord, would I not longer live, if it might please thee Lord. And therewith the good man took our Lord's body betwixt his hands, and proffered 30 it to Galahad, and he received it right gladly and meekly. Now, wotest thou what I am? said the good man. Nay, said Galahad.—I am Joseph of Armathie, which our Lord hath sent here to thee to bear thee fellowship. And wotest thou wherefore that he hath sent me more than any other? For thou hast resembled me in two things, in that thou hast

*St. Gahad  
had died.*

seen the marvels of the Sancgreal, and in that thou hast been a clean maiden, as I have been and am. And when he had said these words, Galahad went to Percivale and kissed him, and commended him to God. And so he went to Sir Bors and kissed him, and commended him to God, and said, Fair lord, salute me to my lord Sir Launcelot, my father, and as soon as ye see him bid him remember of this unstable world. And therewith he kneeled down tofore the table and made his prayers, and then suddenly his soul departed to  
 10 Jesu Christ, and a great multitude of angels bare his soul up to heaven, that the two fellows might well behold it. Also the two fellows saw come from heaven an hand, but they saw not the body; and then it came right to the vessel, and took it and the spear, and so bare it up to heaven. Sithen was there never man so hardy to say that he had seen the Sancgreal.

*Sir Percivale becomes a hermit and dies,*

When Percivale and Bors saw Galahad dead, they made as much sorrow as ever did two men: and if they had not been good men they might lightly have fallen in despair. And the  
 20 people of the country and of the city were right heavy. And then he was buried. And as soon as he was buried, Sir Percivale yielded him to an hermitage out of the city, and took a religious clothing; and Bors was alway with him, but never changed he his secular clothing, for that he purposed him to go again into the realm of Logris. Thus a year and two months lived Sir Percivale in the hermitage a full holy life, and then passed out of this world. And Bors let bury him by his sister and by Galahad in the spiritualities. When Bors saw that he was in so far countries as in  
 30 the parts of Babylon, he departed from Sarras, and armed him, and came to the sea, and entered into a ship, and so it befell him in good adventure he came into the realm of Logris. And he rode so fast till he came to Camelot where the king was. And then was there great joy made of him in the court, for they wend all he had been dead, forasmuch as he had been so long out of the country. And when they

*and Sir Bors returns to Camelot.*

had eaten, the king made great clerks to come afore him, that they should chronicle of the high adventures of the good knights. When Bors had told him of the adventures of the Sancgreal, such as had befallen him and his three fellows, that was Launcelot, Percivale, Galahad and himself, then Launcelot told the adventures of the Sancgreal that he had seen. All this was made in great books, and put in almeries at Salisbury.

## PART III.

### LAUNCELOT AND ELAINE.

#### CHAPTER I.

##### *How Sir Launcelot came to Astolat.*

So after the quest of the Sancgreal was fulfilled, and all knights that were left on live were come again unto the 10 Table Round, as the book of the Sancgreal maketh mention, then was there great joy in the court, and in especial king Arthur and queen Guenever made great joy of the remnant that were come home, and passing glad was the king and the queen of Sir Launcelot and of Sir Bors. For they had been passing long away in the quest of the Sancgreal. Then, as the book saith, Sir Launcelot began to resort unto queen Guenever again, and forgot the promise and the perfection that he made in the quest. For, as the book saith, had not Sir 20 Launcelot been in his privy thoughts and in his mind so set inwardly to the queen, as he was in seeming outward to God, there had no knight passed him in the quest of



the Sancgreal: but ever his thoughts were privily on the queen, and so they loved together more hotter than they did toforehand, that many in the court spake of it, and in especial Sir Agravaine, Sir Gawaine's brother, for he was ever open mouthed.

*The king  
proclaims  
a tourna-  
ment at  
Camelot.*

Thus it passed forth till our Lady day, Assumption. Within a fifteen days of that feast the king let cry a great justs and a tournament that should be at that day at Camelot, that is Winchester. And the king  
10 let cry that he and the king of Scots would just against all that would come against them. And when this cry was made, thither came many knights. So there came thither the king of Northgalis, and king Anguish of Ireland, and the king with the hundred knights, and Sir Galahalt the haut prince, and the king of Northumberland, and many other noble dukes and earls of divers countries. So king Arthur made him ready to depart to these justs, and would have had the queen with him: but at that time she would not, she said, for she was  
20 sick and might not ride at that time. That me repenteth, said the king, for this seven year ye saw not such a fellowship together, except at Whitsuntide when Galahad departed from the court. Truly, said the queen to the king, ye must hold me excused, I may not be there, and that me repenteth. And many deemed the queen would not be there because of Sir Launcelot du Lake, for Sir Launcelot would not ride with the king: for he said that he was not whole of the wound the which Sir Mador had given him. Wherefore the king was heavy  
30 and passing wroth, and so he departed towards Winchester with his fellowship. And so by the way the king lodged in a town called Astolat, that is now in English called Gilford, and there the king lay in the castle.

So when the king was departed, the queen called Sir Launcelot unto her, and said, Sir Launcelot ye are greatly to blame, thus to hold you behind my lord: what trow

ye, what will your enemies and mine say and deem? nought else but see how Sir Launcelot holdeth him ever behind the king, and so doth the queen, for that they would be together; and thus will they say, said the queen to Sir Launcelot, have ye no doubt thereof. Madam, said Sir Launcelot, I allow your wit, it is of late come sin ye were wise, and therefore, madam, as at this time I will be ruled by your counsel, and this night I will take my rest, and to-morrow by time will take my way toward Winchester. But wit you well, said Sir 10 Launcelot to the queen, that at that justs I will be against the king and all his fellowship. Ye may there do as ye list, said the queen, but by my counsel ye shall not be against your king and your fellowship, for therein be full many hardy knights of your blood, as ye wot well enough, it needeth not to rehearse them. Madam, said Sir Launcelot, I pray you that ye be not displeased with me, for I will take the adventure that God will send me.

And so upon the morn early Sir Launcelot heard mass, 20 and brake his fast, and so took his leave of the queen, and departed. And then he rode so much until he came to Astolat, that is Gilford; and there it happed him in the eventide he came to an old baron's place, that hight Sir Bernard of Astolat. And as Sir Launcelot entered into his lodging, king Arthur espied him as he did walk in a garden beside the castle, how he took his lodging, and knew him full well. It is well, said king Arthur unto the knights that were with him in that garden beside the castle, I have now espied one knight that will play 30 his play at the justs to the which we be gone toward, I undertake he will do marvels. Who is that, we pray you tell us, said many knights that were there at that time. Ye shall not wit for me, said the king, at this time. And so the king smiled, and went to his lodging. So when Sir Launcelot was in his lodging, and unarmed

*Sir Launcelot, on his way to Camelot, comes to Astolat.*

him in his chamber the old baron and hermit came unto him, making his reverence, and welcomed him in the best manner; but the old knight knew not Sir Launcelot. Fair sir, said Sir Launcelot to his host, I would pray you to lend me a shield that were not openly known, for mine is well known. Sir, said his host, ye shall have your desire, for me seemeth ye be one of the likeliest knights of the world, and therefore I shall shew you friendship. Sir, wit you well I have two sons which were but late  
10 made knights, and the eldest hight Sir Tirre, and he was hurt that same day that he was made knight, that he may not ride, and his shield ye shall have, for that is not known, I dare say, but here and in no place else. And my youngest son hight Sir Lavaine, and if it please you he shall ride with you unto that justs, and he is of his age strong and wight. For much my heart giveth unto you that ye should be a noble knight, therefore, I pray you tell me your name, said Sir Bernard. As for that, said Sir Launcelot, ye must hold me excused as at this  
20 time, and if God give me grace to speed well at the justs I shall come again and tell you. But I pray you, said Sir Launcelot, in any wise let me have your son Sir Lavaine with me, and that I may have his brother's shield. Also this shall be done, said Sir Bernard.

*Elaine  
begs him  
to wear  
her token  
at the  
jousts.*

This old baron had a daughter that time that was called that time the fair maid of Astolat. And ever she beheld Sir Launcelot wonderfully. And, as the book saith, she cast such a love unto Sir Launcelot that she could never withdraw her love, wherefore she died; and  
30 her name was Elaine le Blank. So thus as she came to and fro, she was so hot in her love that she besought Sir Launcelot to wear upon him at the justs a token of hers. Fair damsel, said Sir Launcelot, and if I grant you that, ye may say I do more for your love than ever I did for lady or damsel. Then he remembered him that he would go to the justs disguised, and for because he

had never afore that time borne no manner of token of no damsel, then he bethought him that he would bear one of her, that none of his blood thereby might know him. And then he said, Fair maiden, I will grant you to wear a token of yours upon my helmet, and therefore what it is shew it me. Sir, she said, it is a red sleeve of mine, of scarlet well embroidered with great pearls. And so she brought it him. So Sir Launcelot received it and said, Never did I erst so much for no damsel. And then Sir Launcelot betook the fair maiden his shield in keeping, 10 and prayed her to keep that until that he came again. And so that night he had merry rest and great cheer. For ever the damsel Elaine was about Sir Launcelot, all the while she might be suffered.

## CHAPTER II.

### *The Tournament.*

So upon a day on the morn, king Arthur and all his knights departed; for their king had tarried there three days to abide his noble knights. And so when the king was riden, Sir Launcelot and Sir Lavaine made them ready for to ride, and either of them had white shields, and the red sleeve Sir Launcelot let carry with him. 20 And so they took their leave at Sir Bernard the old baron, and at his daughter the fair maiden of Astolat. And then they rode so long till they came to Camelot, that time called Winchester. And there was great press of kings, dukes, earls, and barons, and many noble knights. But there Sir Launcelot was lodged privily, by the means of Sir Lavaine, with a rich burgess, that no man in that town was ware what they were. And so they sojourned there till our Lady day, Assumption, as the great feast should be. So then trumpets blew unto the field, and 30

king Arthur was set on high upon a scaffold, to behold who did best. But, as the French book saith, king Arthur would not suffer Sir Gawaine to go from him, for never had Sir Gawaine the better and Sir Launcelot were in the field; and many times was Sir Gawaine rebuked when Launcelot came into any justs disguised.

*Of the two parties.*

Then some of the kings, as king Anguish of Ireland and the king of Scotland, were that time turned upon the side of king Arthur. And then on the other party  
10 was the king of Northgalis, and the king with the hundred knights, and the king of Northumberland, and Sir Galahalt the haut prince. But these three kings and this duke were passing weak to hold against king Arthur's party: for with him were the noblest knights of the world. So then they withdrew them either party from other, and every man made him ready in his best manner to do what he might. Then Sir Launcelot made him ready, and put the red sleeve upon his head, and fastened it fast; and so Sir Launcelot and  
20 Sir Lavaine departed out of Winchester privily, and rode until a little leaved wood, behind the party that held against king Arthur's party, and there they held them still till the parties smote together.

*King Arthur's is the stronger.*

And then came in the king of Scots and the king of Ireland on Arthur's party: and against them came the king of Northumberland and the king with the hundred knights; and the king with the hundred knights smote down king Anguish of Ireland. Then Sir Palamides, that was on Arthur's party, encountered with Sir Galahalt, and either of them smote down other, and either  
30 party halp their lords on horseback again. So there began a strong assail upon both parties. And then there came in Sir Brandiles, Sir Sagrator le Desirous, Sir Dodinas le Savage, Sir Kay le Seneschal, Sir Griflet le Fise de Dieu, Sir Mordred, Sir Meliot de Logris, Sir Ozanna le Cure Hardy, Sir Safere, Sir Epinogris, and

Sir Galleron of Galway. All these fifteen knights were knights of the Table Round. So these with more others came in together, and beat on back the king of Northumberland, and the king of North Wales. When Sir Launcelot saw this, as he hove in a little leaved wood then he said unto Sir Lavaine, See yonder is a company of good knights, and they hold them together as boars that were chafed with dogs. That is truth, said Sir Lavaine.

Now, said Sir Launcelot, and ye will help me a little, 10 ye shall see yonder fellowship which chaseth now these men in our side, that they shall go as fast backward as they went forward. Sir, spare not, said Sir Lavaine, for I shall do what I may. Then Sir Launcelot and Sir Lavaine came in at the thickest of the press, and there Sir Launcelot smote down Sir Brandiles, Sir Sagramor, Sir Dodinas, Sir Kay, Sir Griflet, and all this he did with one spear. And Sir Lavaine smote down Sir Lucan le Buttelere, and Sir Bedivere. And then Sir Launcelot gat another spear, and there he smote down Sir Agravaine, Sir Gaheris, and 20 Sir Mordred, and Sir Meliot de Logris. And Sir Lavaine smote down Ozanna le Cure Hardy: and then Sir Launcelot drew his sword, and there he smote on the right hand and on the left hand, and by great force he unhorsed Sir Safere, Sir Epinogris, and Sir Galleron. And then the knights of the Table Round withdrew them aback, after they had gotten their horses as well as they might. O mercy, said Sir Gawaine, what knight is yonder, that doth so marvellous deeds of arms in that field? I wot what he is, said king Arthur. But as at this time I will not name 30 him. Sir, said Sir Gawaine, I would say it were Sir Launcelot, by his riding and his buffets that I see him deal: but ever me seemeth it should not be he, for that he beareth the red sleeve upon his head, for I wist him never bear token, at no justs, of lady nor gentlewoman. Let him be, said king Arthur, he will be better known

*Sir Launcelot helps the weaker side.*

and do more or ever he depart. Then the party that were against king Arthur were well comforted, and then they held them together, that beforehand were sore rebuked.

*He is sore  
wounded by  
Sir Bors,*

Then Sir Bors, Sir Ector de Maris, and Sir Lionel, called unto them the knights of their blood, as Sir Blamor de Ganis, Sir Bleoberis, Sir Aliduke, Sir Galihud, Sir Galihodin, Sir Bellangere le Beuse, so these nine knights of Sir Launcelot's kin thrust in mightily, for they were all noble knights. And they, of great hate and despite that  
10 they had unto him, thought to rebuke that noble knight Sir Launcelot, and Sir Lavaine, for they knew them not. And so they came hurtling together, and smote down many knights of Northgalis and of Northumberland. And when Sir Launcelot saw them fare so, he gat a spear in his hand, and there encountered with him all at once Sir Bors, Sir Ector, and Sir Lionel, and all they three smote him at once with their spears. And with force of themselves they smote Sir Launcelot's horse to the earth. And by misfortune Sir Bors smote Sir Launcelot through the  
20 shield into the side, and the spear brake, and the head left still in his side.

*but with  
the help of  
Sir Lavaine  
he gains  
the day.*

When Sir Lavaine saw his master lie on the ground, he ran to the king of Scots, and smote him to the earth, and by great force he took his horse and brought him to Sir Launcelot, and maugre them all he made him to mount upon that horse. And then Launcelot gat a spear in his hand, and there he smote Sir Bors horse and man to the earth, in the same wise he served Sir Ector and Sir Lionel, and Sir Lavaine smote down Sir Blamor de  
30 Ganis. And then Sir Launcelot drew his sword, for he felt himself so sore and hurt that he wend there to have had his death. And then he smote Sir Bleoberis such a buffet on the helmet that he fell down to the earth in a swoon. And in the same wise he served Sir Aliduke and Sir Galihud. And Sir Lavaine smote down Sir Bellangere, that was the son of Alisander le Orphelin. And

by this was Sir Bors horsed, and then he came with Sir Ector and Sir Lionel, and all they three smote with swords upon Sir Launcelot's helmet. And when he felt their buffets, and his wound the which was so grievous, then he thought to do what he might while he might endure; and then he gave Sir Bors such a buffet that he made him bow his head passing low, and therewithal he rased off his helm, and might have slain him, and so pulled him down. And in the same wise he served Sir Ector and Sir Lionel. For, as the book saith, he might have slain them, but 10 when he saw their visages his heart might not serve him thereto, but left them there.

And then afterward he hurled in the thickest press of them all, and did there the marvellousest deeds of arms that ever man saw or heard speak of; and ever Sir Lavaine the good knight with him. And there Sir Launcelot with his sword smote and pulled down, as the French book maketh mention, more than thirty knights, and the most party were of the Table Round. And Sir Lavaine did full well that day, for he smote down ten knights of the Table 20 Round.

Mercy, said Sir Gawaine to Arthur, I marvel what knight that he is with the red sleeve. Sir, said king Arthur, he will be known or he depart. And then the king blew unto lodging, and the prize was given by heralds unto the knight with the white shield, that bare the red sleeve. Then came the king with the hundred knights, the king of Northgalis, and the king of Northumberland, and Sir Galahalt the haut prince, and said unto Sir Launcelot, Fair knight, God thee bless, for much have ye done this 30 day for us, therefore we pray you that ye will come with us, that ye may receive the honour and the prize as ye have worshipfully deserved it. My fair lords, said Sir Launcelot, wit you well, if I have deserved thank I have sore bought it, and that me repenteth, for I am like never to escape with my life, therefore, fair lords, I pray you



that ye will suffer me to depart where me liketh, for I am sore hurt. I take none force of none honour, for I had lever to repose me than to be lord of all the world.

*Sir Launcelot being in peril of death*

- And therewithal he groaned piteously, and rode a great wallop away-ward from them, until he came under a wood's side; and when he saw that he was from the field nigh a mile, that he was sure he might not be seen, then he said with an high voice, O gentle knight Sir Lavaine, help me that this truncheon were out of my side, for it sticketh  
 10 so sore that it nigh slayeth me. O mine own lord, said Sir Lavaine, I would fain do that might please you, but I dread me sore, and I draw out the truncheon, that ye shall be in peril of death. I charge you, said Sir Launcelot, as ye love me draw it out. And therewithal he descended from his horse, and right so did Sir Lavaine, and forthwith Sir Lavaine drew the truncheon out of his side. And he gave a great shriek, and a marvellous grisly groan, and his blood brast out nigh a pint at once, that at last he sank down, and so swooned pale and deadly. Alas, said Sir Lavaine,  
 20 what shall I do? And then he turned Sir Launcelot into the wind, but so he lay there nigh half an hour as he had been dead.

*is brought by Sir Lavaine to a hermitage.*

- And so at the last Sir Launcelot cast up his eyes, and said, O Lavaine, help me that I were on my horse, for here is fast by within this two mile a gentle hermit, that sometime was a full noble knight and a great lord of possessions: and for great goodness he hath taken him to wilful poverty, and forsaken many lands, and his name is Sir Baudewin of Brittany, and he is a full noble  
 30 surgeon, and a good leech. Now let see, help me up that I were there. For ever my heart giveth me that I shall never die of my cousin-german's hands. And then with great pain Sir Lavaine halp him upon his horse; and then they rode a great wallop together, and ever Sir Launcelot bled that it ran down to the earth. And so by fortune they came to that hermitage, which was under a wood, and

a great cliff on the other side, and a fair water running under it. And then Sir Lavaine beat on the gate with the butt of his spear, and cried fast, Let in for Jesu's sake. And there came a fair child to them, and asked them what they would? Fair son, said Sir Lavaine, go and pray thy lord the hermit for God's sake to let in here a knight that is full sore wounded, and this day tell thy lord that I saw him do more deeds of arms than ever I heard say that any man did. So the child went in lightly, and then he brought the hermit, the which was a passing good man. 10 So when Sir Lavaine saw him, he prayed him for God's sake of succour. What knight is he? said the hermit, is he of the house of king Arthur or not? I wot not, said Sir Lavaine, what is he, nor what is his name, but well I wot I saw him do marvellously this day, as of deeds of arms. On whose party was he? said the hermit. Sir, said Sir Lavaine, he was this day against king Arthur, and there he wan the prize of all the knights of the Round Table. I have seen the day, said the hermit, I would have loved him the worse because he was against 20 my lord king Arthur, for sometime I was one of the fellowship of the Round Table, but I thank God now I am otherwise disposed. But where is he? let me see him. Then Sir Lavaine brought the hermit to him.

And when the hermit beheld him as he sat leaning upon his saddle-bow, ever bleeding piteously, and ever the knight hermit thought that he should know him, but he could not bring him to knowledge, because he was so pale for bleeding, What knight are ye? said the hermit, and where were ye born? My fair lord, said Sir Launcelot, I am a 30 stranger, and a knight adventurous that laboureth throughout many realms for to win worship. Then the hermit advised him better, and saw by a wound on his cheek that he was Sir Launcelot. Alas, said the hermit, mine own lord, why hide you your name from me: forsooth I ought to know you of right, for ye are the most noblest

knight of the world ; for well I know you for Sir Launcelot. Sir, said he, sith ye know me, help me and ye may, for God's sake ; for I would be out of this pain at once, either to death or to life. Have ye no doubt, said the hermit, ye shall live and fare right well. And so the hermit called to him two of his servants, and so he and his servants bare him into the hermitage, and lightly unarmed him and laid him in his bed. And then anon the hermit stanchd his blood, and made him to drink good  
 10 wine, so that Sir Launcelot was well refreshed, and knew himself. For in those days it was not the guise of hermits as is now adays. For there were none hermits in those days but that they had been men of worship and of prowess, and those hermits held great household, and refreshed people that were in distress.

## CHAPTER III.

*How Launcelot was healed of his wound.*

*Sir Galahad seeks for the knight of the red sleeve.*

Now turn we unto king Arthur, and leave we Sir Launcelot in the hermitage. So when the kings were come together on both parties, and the great feast should be holden, king Arthur asked the king of Northgalis and their fellowship  
 20 where was that knight that bare the red sleeve :—Bring him before me, that he may have his laud and honour and the prize, as it is right. Then spake Sir Galahad the haut prince and the king with the hundred knights : We suppose that knight is mischieved, and that he is never like to see you, nor none of us all, and that is the greatest pity that ever we wist of any knight. Alas, said Arthur, how may this be ? is he so hurt ? What is his name ? said king Arthur. Truly, said they all, we know not his name, nor from whence he came, nor whither he would.  
 30 Alas, said the king, these be to me the worst tidings that

came to me this seven year: for I would not for all the lands I hold, to know and wit it were so that that noble knight were slain. Know ye him? said they all. As for that, said Arthur, whether I know him or know him not, ye shall not know for me what man he is, but Almighty Jesu send me good tidings of him. And so said they all. By my head, said Sir Gawaine, if it be so, that the good knight be so sore hurt, it is great damage and pity to all this land, for he is one of the noblest knights that ever I saw in a field handle a spear or a sword. And if he 10 may be found I shall find him, for I am sure he is not far from this town. Bear you well, said king Arthur, and ye may find him, unless that he be in such a plight that he may not hold himself. Jesu defend, said Sir Gawaine, but wit I shall what he is, and I may find him. Right so, Sir Gawaine took a squire with him, upon hackneys, and rode all about Camelot within six or seven miles. But so he came again, and could hear no word of him.

Then within two days king Arthur and all the fellow-ship returned unto London again. And so as they rode 20 by the way, it happed Sir Gawaine at Astolat to lodge with Sir Bernard, there as was Sir Launcelot lodged. And so as Sir Gawaine was in his chamber to repose him, Sir Bernard the old baron came unto him, and his daughter Elaine, for to cheer him, and to ask him what tidings, and who did best at that tournament of Winchester. Truly, said Sir Gawaine, there were two knights that bare two white shields; but the one of them bare a red sleeve upon his head, and certainly he was one of the best knights that ever I saw just in field. For I dare say, said Sir Gawaine, 30 that one knight with the red sleeve smote down forty valiant knights of the Table Round, and his fellow did right well and worshipfully. Now blessed be God, said the fair maiden of Astolat, that that knight sped so well, for he is the man in the world that I first loved, and truly he shall be the last that ever I shall love. Now

*Sir  
Gawaine  
comes to  
Astolat,*

fair maid, said Sir Gawaine, is that good knight your love? Certainly, sir, said she, wit ye well he is my love. Then know ye his name, said Sir Gawaine. Nay, truly, said the damsel, I know not his name, nor from whence he cometh, but to say that I love him, I promise you and God that I love him. How had ye knowledge of him first? said Sir Gawaine.

*and recog-  
nises Sir  
Launce-  
lot's shield.*

Then she told him as ye have heard tofore, and how her father betook him her brother to do him service, and  
 10 how her father lent him her brother Sir Tirre's shield,—  
 And here with me he left his own shield. For what cause did he so? said Sir Gawaine. For this cause, said the damsel, for his shield was too well known among many noble knights. Ah, fair damsel, said Sir Gawaine, please it you let me have a sight of that shield. Sir, said she, it is in my chamber covered with a case, and if ye will come with me, ye shall see it. Not so, said Sir Bernard till his daughter, let send for it. So when the shield was come, Sir Gawaine took off the case: and when he beheld  
 20 that shield, he knew anon that it was Sir Launcelot's shield, and his own arms. Ah, mercy, said Sir Gawaine, now is my heart more heavier than ever it was tofore. Why? said Elaine. For I have great cause, said Sir Gawaine: is that knight that owneth this shield your love? Yea truly, said she, my love he is, God would I were his love. Truly, said Sir Gawaine, fair damsel, ye have right, for, and he be your love, ye love the most honourable knight of the world, and the man of most worship. So me thought ever, said the damsel, for never, or that  
 30 time, for no knight that ever I saw loved I never none erst. God grant, said Sir Gawaine, that either of you may rejoice other, but that is in a great adventure.

But truly, said Sir Gawaine unto the damsel, ye may say ye have a fair grace, for why, I have known that noble knight this four and twenty year, and never or that day I nor none other knight, I dare make it good, saw nor

heard say that ever he bare token or sign of no lady, gentlewoman, nor maiden, at no justs nor tournament. And therefore, fair maiden, said Sir Gawaine, ye are much beholden to him to give him thanks. But I dread me, said Sir Gawaine, that ye shall never see him in this world, and that is great pity that ever was of earthly knight. Alas, said she, how may this be? Is he slain? I say not so, said Sir Gawaine, but wit ye well, he is grievously wounded, by all manner of signs, and by men's sight more likely to be dead then to be on live; and wit 10 ye well he is the noble knight Sir Launcelot, for by this shield I know him. Alas, said the fair maiden of Astolat, how may this be, and what was his hurt? Truly, said Sir Gawaine, the man in the world that loved him best hurt him so, and I dare say, said Sir Gawaine, and that knight that hurt him knew the very certainty that he had hurt Sir Launcelot, it would be the most sorrow that ever came to his heart. Now, fair father, said then Elaine, I require you give me leave to ride and to seek him, or else I wot well I shall go out of my mind, for I shall 20 never stint till that I find him and my brother Sir Lavaine. Do as it liketh you, said her father, for me right sore repenteth of the hurt of that noble knight. Right so the maid made her ready, and before Sir Gawaine making great dole.

Then on the morn Sir Gawaine came to king Arthur, and told him how he had found Sir Launcelot's shield in the keeping of the fair maiden of Astolat. All that knew I aforehand, said king Arthur, and that caused me I would not suffer you to have ado at the great 30 justs: for I espied, said king Arthur, when he came in till his lodging, full late in the evening in Astolat. But marvel have I, said Arthur, that ever he would bear any sign of any damsel: for, or now, I never heard say nor knew that ever he bare any token of none earthly woman. By my head, said Sir Gawaine, the fair

maiden of Astolat loveth him marvellously well ; what it meaneth I cannot say ; and she is ridden after to seek him. So the king and all came to London, and there Sir Gawaine openly disclosed to all the court that it was Sir Launcelot that justed best. And so leave we them there, and speak we of Sir Launcelot, that lay in great peril.

*Elaine  
finds Sir  
Launcelot  
at the  
hermitage,*

- So as fair Elaine came to Winchester, she sought there all about, and by fortune Sir Lavaine was ridden to play him, to enchafe his horse. And anon as Elaine saw him
- 10 she knew him, and then she cried on loud until him. And when he heard her, anon he came to her ; and then she asked her brother, How did my lord, Sir Launcelot ? Who told you, sister, that my lord's name was Sir Launcelot ? Then she told him how Sir Gawaine by his shield knew him. So they rode together till that they came to the hermitage, and anon she alight. So Sir Lavaine brought her in to Sir Launcelot. And when she saw him lie so sick and pale in his bed, she might not speak, but suddenly she fell to the earth down suddenly in a swoon,
- 20 and there she lay a great while. And when she was relieved she sighed, and said, My lord Sir Launcelot, alas, why be ye in this plight ? and then she swooned again. And then Sir Launcelot prayed Sir Lavaine to take her up,—And bring her to me. And when she came to herself, Sir Launcelot kissed her, and said, Fair maiden, why fare ye thus ? Ye put me to pain ; wherefore make ye no more such cheer, for, and ye be come to comfort me, ye be right welcome, and of this little hurt that I have, I shall be right hastily whole, by the grace of God. But
- 30 I marvel, said Sir Launcelot, who told you my name. Then the fair maiden told him all how Sir Gawaine was lodged with her father,—And there by your shield he discovered your name. Alas, said Sir Launcelot, that me repenteth, that my name is known, for I am sure it will turn unto anger. And then Sir Launcelot compassed in his mind that Sir Gawaine would tell queen Guenever

how he bare the red sleeve, and for whom, that he wist well would turn unto great anger.

So this maiden, Elaine, never went from Sir Launcelot, but watched him day and night, and did such attendance to him that the French book saith there was never woman did more kindlier for man than she. Then Sir Launcelot prayed Sir Lavaine to make espies in Winchester for Sir Bors if he came there, and told him by what tokens he should know him, by a wound in his forehead: For well I am sure, said Sir Launcelot, that Sir Bors will seek me, for he is the same good knight that hurt me.

*and  
watches  
him night  
and day.*

Now turn we unto Sir Bors de Ganis, that came unto Winchester to seek after his cousin, Sir Launcelot; and so when he came to Winchester, anon there were men that Sir Lavaine had made to lie in a watch for such a man; and anon Sir Lavaine had warning; and then Sir Lavaine came to Winchester, and found Sir Bors, and there he told him what he was, and with whom he was, and what was his name. Now, fair knight, said Sir Bors, 20 I require you that ye will bring me to my lord Sir Launcelot. Sir, said Sir Lavaine, take your horse, and within this hour ye shall see him. And so they departed, and came to the hermitage.

*Sir Bors  
finds his  
cousin, Sir  
Launcelot,*

And when Sir Bors saw Sir Launcelot lie in his bed, pale and discoloured, anon Sir Bors lost his countenance, and for kindness and pity he might not speak, but wept tenderly a great while. And then when he might speak he said thus: O my lord Sir Launcelot, God you bless, and send you hasty recovery; and full heavy am I of 30 my misfortune and of mine unhappiness, for now I may call myself unhappy, and I dread me that God is greatly displeased with me, that he would suffer me to have such a shame for to hurt you, that are all our leader and all our worship, and therefore I call myself unhappy. Alas, that ever such a caitiff knight as I am should have power

*and begs  
for his jour-  
giveness.*



by unhappiness to hurt the most noblest knight of the world. Where I so shamefully set upon you and overcharged you, and where ye might have slain me, ye saved me, and so did not I: for I, and your blood, did to you our utterance. I marvel, said Sir Bors, that my heart or my blood would serve me, wherefore my lord Sir Launcelot, I ask your mercy. Fair cousin, said Sir Launcelot, ye be right welcome, and wit ye well, overmuch ye say for to please me, the which pleaseth me not; for why? I  
10 have the same sought, for I would with pride have overcome you all, and there in my pride I was near slain, and that was in mine own default, for I might have given you warning of my being there. And then had I had no hurt; for it is an old said saw, there is hard battle there as kin and friends do battle either against other; there may be no mercy, but mortal war. Therefore, fair cousin, said Sir Launcelot, let this speech overpass, and all shall be welcome that God sendeth; and let us leave off this matter, and let us speak of some rejoicing: for this that  
20 is done may not be undone, and let us find a remedy how soon that I may be whole.

Then Sir Bors leaned upon his bed's side, and told Sir Launcelot how the queen was passing wroth with him, because he ware the red sleeve at the great justs. And there Sir Bors told him all how Sir Gawaine discovered it by your shield that ye left with the fair maiden of Astolat. Then is the queen wroth, said Sir Launcelot, and therefore am I right heavy, for I deserved no wrath, for all that I did was because that I  
30 would not be known. Right so excused I you, said Sir Bors, but all was in vain, for she said more largely to me than I to you now. But is this she, said Sir Bors, that is so busy about you, that men call the fair maiden of Astolat? She it is, said Sir Launcelot, that by no means I cannot put from me. Why should ye put her from you? said Sir Bors, she is a passing fair damsel,

and a well beseen and well taught; and God would, fair cousin, said Sir Bors, that ye could love her, but as to that I may not, nor I dare not, counsel you. But I see well, said Sir Bors, by her diligence about you, that she loveth you entirely. That me repenteth, said Sir Launcelot. Sir, said Sir Bors, she is not the first that hath lost her pain upon you, and that is the more pity. And so they talked of many more things. And so within three days or four, Sir Launcelot was big and strong again. So then they made them ready to depart from the hermit. 10

## CHAPTER IV.

*Launcelot leaves the Hermit.*

And so upon a morn they took their horses, and Elaine le Blank with them; and when they came to Astolat, there they were well lodged, and had great cheer of Sir Bernard the old baron, and of Sir Tirre his son. And so upon the morn, when Sir Launcelot should depart, fair Elaine brought her father with her, and Sir Tirre and Sir Lavaine, and thus she said:

My lord Sir Launcelot, now I see ye will depart, now, fair knight and courteous knight, have mercy upon me, and suffer me not to die for thy love. What would ye 20 that I did? said Sir Launcelot. I would have you to my husband, said Elaine. Fair damsel, I thank you, said Sir Launcelot, but truly, said he, I cast me never to be wedded man. Then, fair knight, said she, will ye be my love? Jesu defend me, said Sir Launcelot, for then I rewarded to your father and your brother full evil for their great goodness. Alas, said she, then must I die for your love. Ye shall not so, said Sir Launcelot, for wit ye well, fair maiden, I might have been married and I had would, but

*Elaine in  
vain prays  
Sir Laun-  
celot for  
his love.*

I never applied me to be married yet. But because, fair damsel, that ye love me as ye say ye do, I will, for your good will and kindness, shew you some goodness, and that is this; that wheresoever ye will beset your heart upon some good knight that will wed you, I shall give you together a thousand pound yearly, to you and to your heirs. Thus much will I give you, fair madam, for your kindness, and always while I live to be your own knight. Of all this, said the maiden, I will none, for, but if ye  
10 will wed me, or else be my lover, wit you well, Sir Launcelot, my good days are done. Fair damsel, said Sir Launcelot, of these two things ye must pardon me. Then she shrieked shrilly, and fell down in a swoon; and then women bare her into her chamber, and there she made overmuch sorrow.

And then Sir Launcelot would depart; and there he asked Sir Lavaine what he would do. What should I do, said Sir Lavaine, but follow you, but if ye drive me from you, or command me to go from you? Then  
20 came Sir Bernard to Sir Launcelot, and said to him, I cannot see but that my daughter Elaine will die for your sake. I may not do withal, said Sir Launcelot, for that me sore repenteth; for I report me to yourself that my proffer is fair, and me repenteth, said Sir Launcelot, that she loveth me as she doth: I was never the causer of it, for I report me to your son, I early nor late proffered her bounty nor fair behests: and as for me, said Sir Launcelot, I dare do all that a good knight should do, that she is a true maiden, both for deed and for will;  
30 and I am right heavy of her distress, for she is a full fair maiden, good, and gentle, and well taught. Father, said Sir Lavaine, I dare make good she is pure and good as my lord Sir Launcelot hath said; but she doth as I do, for since I first saw my lord Sir Launcelot I could never depart from him, nor nought I will and I may follow him.

Then Sir Launcelot took his leave, and so they departed, and came unto Winchester. And when Arthur wist that Sir Launcelot was come, whole and sound, the king made great joy of him, and so did Sir Gawaine, and all the knights of the Round Table except Sir Agravaine and Sir Mordred. Also queen Guenever was wood wroth with Sir Launcelot, and would by no means speak with him, but estranged herself from him, and Sir Launcelot made all the means that he might to speak with the queen, but it would not be.

*Sir Launcelot returns to Winchester.*

10

Now speak we of the fair maiden of Astolat, that made such sorrow day and night, that she never slept, eat, nor drank; and ever she made her complaint unto Sir Launcelot. So when she had thus endured a ten days, that she feebled so that she must needs pass out of this world, then she shrived her clean, and received her Creator. And ever she complained still upon Sir Launcelot. Then her ghostly father bade her leave such thoughts. Then she said, Why should I leave such thoughts? am I not an earthly woman? and 'all the while the breath is in 20 my body I may complain me, for my belief is I do none offence though I love an earthly man, and I take God to my record I never loved none but Sir Launcelot du Lake, nor never shall; and a pure maiden I am for him and for all other. And since it is the sufferance of God that I shall die for the love of so noble a knight, I beseech the High Father of heaven to have mercy upon my soul, and upon mine innumerable pains that I suffered may be allegiance of part of my sins. For sweet Lord Jesu, said the fair maiden, I take thee to record, on thee 30 I was never great offender against thy laws, but that I loved this noble knight Sir Launcelot out of measure, and of myself, good Lord, I might not withstand the fervent love wherefore I have my death. And then she called her father Sir Bernard, and her brother Sir Tirre, and heartily she prayed her father that her brother might

*Elaine makes such sorrow that she dies.*

write a letter like as she did endite it ; and so her father granted her. And when the letter was written word by word like as she devised, then she prayed her father that she might be watched until she were dead,—And while my body is hot, let this letter be put in my right hand, and my hand bound fast with the letter until that I be cold, and let me be put in a fair bed, with all the richest clothes that I have about me, and so let my bed, and all my richest clothes, be laid with me in a chariot unto the  
10 next place where Thames is, and there let me be put within a barget, and but one man with me, such as ye trust to steer me thither, and that my barget be covered with black samite, over and over. Thus, father, I beseech you, let it be done. So her father granted it her faithfully, all things should be done like as she had devised. Then her father and her brother made great dole, for, when this was done, anon she died. And so when she was dead, the corpse, and the bed, all was led the next way unto Thames, and there a man, and the corpse, and  
20 all, were put into Thames, and so the man steered the barget unto Westminster, and there he rowed a great while to and fro or any espied it.

*Her body  
comes to  
West-  
minster.*

So by fortune king Arthur and the queen Guenever were speaking together at a window ; and so as they looked into Thames, they espied this black barget, and had marvel what it meant. Then the king called Sir Kay, and shewed it him. Sir, said Sir Kay, wit you well there is some new tidings. Go thither, said the king to Sir Kay, and take with you Sir Brandiles and  
30 Agravaire, and bring me ready word what is there. Then these three knights departed, and came to the barget, and went in ; and there they found the fairest corpse lying in a rich bed, and a poor man sitting in the barget's end, and no word would he speak. So these three knights returned unto the king again, and told him what they found. That fair corpse will I see, said the king. And so

then the king took the queen by the hand and went thither. Then the king made the barget to be holden fast; and then the king and the queen entered, with certain knights with them. And there he saw the fairest woman lie in a rich bed, covered unto her middle with many rich clothes, and all was of cloth of gold, and she lay as though she had smiled.

Then the queen espied a letter in her right hand, and told it to the king. Then the king took it, and said, Now I am sure this letter will tell what she was, and 10 why she is come hither. Then the king and the queen went out of the barget, and so commanded a certain man to wait upon the barget. And so when the king was come within his chamber, he called many knights about him, and said that he would wit openly what was written within that letter. Then the king brake it, and made a clerk to read it; and this was the intent of the letter:—Most noble knight, Sir Launcelot, now hath death made us two at debate for your love; I was your lover, that men called the fair maiden of Astolat; therefore 20 unto all ladies I make my moan; yet pray for my soul, and bury me at the least, and offer ye my mass-penny. This is my last request. And a clean maiden I died, I take God to witness. Pray for my soul, Sir Launcelot, as thou art peerless.—This was all the substance in the letter. And when it was read, the king, the queen, and all the knights wept for pity of the doleful complaints.

Then was Sir Launcelot sent for. And when he was come, king Arthur made the letter to be read to him; and when Sir Launcelot heard it word by word, he said, My lord 30 Arthur, wit ye well I am right heavy of the death of this fair damsel. God knoweth I was never causer of her death by my willing, and that will I report me to her own brother; here he is, Sir Lavaine. I will not say nay, said Sir Launcelot, but that she was both fair and good, and much I was beholden unto her, but she loved me out of

*Sir Launcelot  
mourns at  
her death*

measure. Ye might have shewed her, said the queen, some bounty and gentleness, that might have preserved her life. Madam, said Sir Launcelot, she would none other way be answered, but that she would be my wife, or else my love, and of these two I would not grant her; but I proffered her, for her good love that she shewed me, a thousand pound yearly to her and to her heirs, and to wed any manner knight that she could find best to love in her heart. For, madam, said Sir Launcelot, I love not to be  
10 constrained to love; for love must arise of the heart, and not by no constraint. That is truth, said the king and many knights: love is free in himself, and never will be bounden; for where he is bounden he loseth himself.

*and causes  
her to be  
buried wor-  
shipfully.*

Then said the king unto Sir Launcelot, It will be your worship that ye oversee that she be interred worshipfully. Sir, said Sir Launcelot, that shall be done as I can best devise. And so many knights went thither to behold that fair maiden. And so upon the morn she was interred richly, and Sir Launcelot offered her mass-penny,  
20 and all the knights of the Table Round that were there at that time offered with Sir Launcelot. And then the poor man went again with the barget. Then the queen sent for Sir Launcelot, and prayed him of mercy, for why she had been wroth with him causeless. This is not the first time, said Sir Launcelot, that ye have been displeased with me causeless; but, madam, ever I must suffer you, but what sorrow I endure I take no force. So this passed on all that winter, with all manner of hunting and hawking; and justs and tourneys were many betwixt  
30 many great lords; and ever in all places Sir Lavaine gat great worship, so that he was nobly renowned among many knights of the Table Round.

## PART IV.

### THE WAR BETWEEN KING ARTHUR AND SIR LAUNCELOT.

#### CHAPTER I.

*How Sir Launcelot was taken in the Queen's Chamber.*

IN May, when every lusty heart flourisheth and burgeneth ; for as the season is lusty to behold and comfortable, so man and woman rejoice and gladden of summer coming with his fresh flowers : for winter, with his rough winds and blasts, causeth a lusty man and woman to cower and sit fast by the fire. So in this season, as in the month of May, it befell a great anger and unhap that stinted not till the flower of chivalry of all the world was destroyed and slain : and all was long upon two unhappy knights, the which were named Sir Agravaïne 10 and Sir Mordred that were brethren unto Sir Gawaine. For this Sir Agravaïne and Sir Mordred had ever a privy hate unto the queen dame Guenever, and to Sir Launcelot, and daily and nightly they ever watched upon Sir Launcelot.

*Of the  
hatred  
which Sir  
Agravaïne  
and Sir  
Mordred  
bare unto  
the queen  
and Sir  
Launcelot*

So it mis-happed Sir Gawaine and all his brethren were in king Arthur's chamber, and then Sir Agravaïne said thus openly, and not in no counsel, that many knights might hear it, I marvel that we all be not ashamed both to see and to know how Sir Launcelot 20 goeth with the queen, and all we know it so, and it is shamefully suffered of us all, that we all should suffer so noble a king, as king Arthur is, so to be shamed. Then spake Sir Gawaine, and said, Brother, Sir Agravaïne, I pray you, and charge you, move no such matters no more



afore me; for wit ye well,' said Sir Gawaine, I will not be of your counsel. Truly, said Sir Gaheris, and Sir Gareth, we will not be knowing, brother Agravaine, of your deeds. Then will I, said Sir Mordred. I believe we'll that, said Sir Gawaine, for ever unto all unhappiness, brother Sir Mordred, thereto will ye grant, and I would that ye left all this, and made you not so busy, for I know, said Sir Gawaine, what will fall of it. Fall of it what fall may, said Sir Agravaine, I will disclose  
10 it to the king. Not by my counsel, said Sir Gawaine, for and there rise war and wrake betwixt Sir Launcelot and us, wit you well, brother, there will many kings and great lords hold with Sir Launcelot. Also, brother Sir Agravaine, said Sir Gawaine, ye must remember how oft-times Sir Launcelot hath rescued the king and the queen, and the best of us all had been full cold at the heart-root, had not Sir Launcelot been better than we; and that hath he proved himself full oft. And as for my part, said Sir Gawaine, I will never be against Sir Launcelot,  
20 for one day's deed, when he rescued me from king Carados of the dolorous tower, and slew him, and saved my life. Also, brother Sir Agravaine, and Sir Mordred, in likewise Sir Launcelot rescued you both, and three-score and two, from Sir Turquin. Me thinketh, brother, such kind deeds and kindness should be remembered. Do as ye list, said Sir Agravaine, for I will hide it no longer.

With these words came to them king Arthtur. Now, brother, stint your noise, said Sir Gawaine. We will not, said Sir Agravaine and Sir Mordred. Will ye so? said Sir  
30 Gawaine, then God speed you, for I will not hear your tales, nor be of your counsel. No more will I, said Sir Gareth and Sir Gaheris, for we will never say evil by that man: for because, said Sir Gareth, Sir Launcelot made me knight, by no manner ought I to say ill of him. And therewithal they three departed, making great dole. Alas, said Sir Gawaine and Sir Gareth, now is this realm wholly

mischieved, and the noble fellowship of the Round Table shall be dispersed. So they departed.

And then Sir Arthur asked them what noise they made. My lord, said Agravaine, I shall tell you that I may keep no longer. Here is I and my brother, Sir Mordred, brake unto my brother Sir Gawaine, Sir Gaheris, and to Sir Gareth, how this we know all, that Sir Launcelot holdeth your queen, and hath done long, and we be your sister's sons, and we may suffer it no longer; and all we wot that ye should be above Sir Launcelot, and ye are the 10 king that made him knight, and, therefore, we will prove it that he is a traitor to your person. If it be so, said Sir Arthur, wit you well he is none other, but I would be loth to begin such a thing, but I might have proofs upon it; for Sir Launcelot is an hardy knight, and all ye know he is the best knight among us all, and, but if he be taken with the deed, he will fight with him that bringeth up the noise, and I know no knight that is able to match him. Therefore, and it be sooth as ye say, I would he were taken with the deed. For, as the French 20 book saith, the king was full loth thereto, that any noise should be upon Sir Launcelot and his queen; for the king had a deeming, but he would not hear of it, for Sir Launcelot had done so much for him and for the queen so many times, that, wit ye well, the king loved him passing well. My lord, said Sir Agravaine, ye shall ride to-morrow on hunting, and doubt ye not, Sir Launcelot will not go with you. Then when it draweth toward night, ye may send the queen word that ye will lie out all that night, and so may ye send for your cooks; and 30 then, upon pain of death, we shall take him with the queen, and either we shall bring him to you dead or quick. I will well, said the king, then I counsel you, said the king, take with you sure fellowship. Sir, said Agravaine, my brother, Sir Mordred, and I will take with us twelve knights of the Round Table. Beware,

*They make  
a plot to  
entrap Sir  
Launcelot.*

said king Arthur, for I warn you ye shall find him wight. Let us deal, said Sir Agravaine and Sir Mordred.

*Sir Launcelot goes to speak with the queen,*

So on the morn, king Arthur rode on hunting, and sent word to the queen that he would be out all that night. Then Sir Agravaine and Sir Mordred gat to them twelve knights, and did themselves in a chamber, in the castle of Carlisle. So when the night came, Sir Launcelot told Sir Bors how he would go that night, and speak with the queen. Sir, said Sir Bors, ye shall not go this 10 night, by my counsel. Why? said Sir Launcelot. Sir, said Sir Bors, I dread me ever of Sir Agravaine, that waiteth you daily, to do you shame, and us all, and never gave my heart against no going that ever ye went to the queen, so much as now, for I mistrust that the king is out this night from the queen, because, peradventure, he hath lain some watch for you and the queen, and therefore I dread me sore of treason. Have ye no dread, said Sir Launcelot, for I shall go, and come again, and make no tarrying. Sir, said Sir Bors, that me sore re- 20 penteth, for I dread me sore that your going out this night shall wrath us all. Fair nephew, said Sir Launcelot, I marvel me much why ye say thus, sithen the queen hath sent for me, and wit ye well that I will not be so much a coward, but she shall understand I will see her good grace. God speed you well, said Sir Bors, and send you sound and safe again.

*and is attacked by fourteen knights,*

So Sir Launcelot departed, and took his sword under his arm, and so in his mantle that noble knight put himself in great jeopardy, and so he passed till he came to the queen's 30 chamber. And then, as the French book saith, there came Sir Agravaine, and Sir Mordred, with twelve knights with them of the Round Table, and they said with crying voice, Traitor knight, Sir Launcelot du Lake, now art thou taken. And thus they cried with a loud voice that all the court might hear it: and they all fourteen were armed at all points as they should fight in a battle. Alas, said queen

GuenEVER, now are we mischieved both. Madam, said Sir Launcelot, is there here any armour within your chamber that I might cover my poor body withal, and if there be any, give it me, and I shall soon stint their malice. Truly, said the queen, I have none armour, shield, sword, nor spear, wherefore I dread me sore our long love is come to a mischievous end; for, I hear by their noise, there be many noble knights, and well I wot they be surely armed, against them ye may make no resistance; wherefore ye are likely to be slain, and then shall I be burnt. For, and ye might 10 escape them, said the queen, I would not doubt but that ye would rescue me in what danger that ever I stood in. Alas said Sir Launcelot, in all my life was I never bested that I shou... be thus shamefully slain for lack of mine armour. But ever in one Sir Agravaine and Sir Mordred cried, Traitor knight, come out of the queen's chamber, for wit thou well thou art so beset that thou shalt not escape. Oh mercy, said Sir Launcelot, this shameful cry and noise I may not suffer, for better were death at once, than thus to endure this pain. 20

Then he took the queen in his arms, and kissed her, and said, Most noble christian queen, I beseech you, as ye have ever been my special good lady, and I at all times your true poor knight unto my power, and as I never failed you in right nor in wrong, since the first day that king Arthur made me knight, that ye will pray for my soul if that I here be slain. For well I am well assured that Sir Bors my nephew and all the remnant of my kin, with Sir Lavaine and Sir Urre, that they will not fail you to rescue you from the fire, and therefore, mine own lady, re-comfort 30 yourself whatsoever come of me, that ye go with Sir Bors my nephew, and Sir Urre, and they all will do you all the pleasure that they can or may, that ye shall live like a queen upon my lands. Nay, Launcelot, said the queen, wit thou well I will never live after thy days, but, and thou be slain, I will take my death as meekly for Jesu Christ's sake,

as ever did any Christian queen. Well, madam, said Launcelot, sith it is so that the day is come that our love must depart, wit you well I shall sell my life as dear as I may, and a thousand fold, said Sir Launcelot, I am more heavier for you than for myself. And now I had lever than to be lord of all Christendom, that I had sure armour upon me, that men might speak of my deeds or ever I were slain. Truly, said the queen, I would and it might please God that they would take me and slay me, and suffer you to escape.

10 That shall never be, said Sir Launcelot. God defend me from such a shame, but Jesu be thou my shield and mine armour.

*but Sir  
Launcelot  
overcomes  
them all.*

And therewith Sir Launcelot wrapped his mantle about his arm well and surely; and by then they had gotten a great form out of the hall, and therewithal they rushed at the door. Fair lords, said Sir Launcelot, leave your noise and your rashing, and I shall set open this door, and then may ye do with me what it liketh you. Come off then, said they all, and do it, for it availeth thee not to strive against us all,

20 and therefore let us into this chamber, and we shall save thy life until thou come to king Arthur. Then Launcelot unbarred the door, and with his left hand he held it open a little so that but one man might come in at once. And so anon, there came striding a good knight, a much man and large, and his name was Colgrevice of Gore, and he with a sword strake at Sir Launcelot mightily, and he put aside the stroke, and gave him such a buffet upon the helmet that he fell groveling dead within the chamber door, and then Sir Launcelot with great might drew that dead

30 knight within the chamber door; and then Sir Launcelot with the help of the queen and her ladies was lightly armed in Sir Colgrevice's armour. And ever stood Sir Agravaire and Sir Mordred, crying, Traitor knight, come out of the queen's chamber. Leave your noise, said Sir Launcelot unto Sir Agravaire, for wit ye well, Sir Agravaire, ye shall not prison me this night, and therefore

and ye do by my counsel, go ye all from this chamber door, and make not such crying and such manner of slander as ye do, for I promise you by my knighthood, and ye will depart and make no more noise, I shall as to-morn appear before you all, before the king, and then let it be seen which of you all, either else ye all, will accuse me of treason, and there I shall answer you as a knight should, that hither I came to the queen for no manner of mal-engine, and that will I prove and make it good upon you with mine hands. Fie on thee, traitor, said Sir Agravaine and Sir Mordred, we 10 will have thee, maugre thy head, and slay thee if we list, for we let thee wit, we have the choice of king Arthur, to save thee or to slay thee. Ah sirs, said Sir Launcelot, is there none other grace with you? then keep yourself.

So then Sir Launcelot set all open the chamber door, and mightily and knightly he strode in amongst them, and anon at the first buffet he slew Sir Agravaine, and twelve of his fellows within a little while after he laid them cold to the earth, for there was none of the twelve that might stand Sir Launcelot one buffet. Also Sir Launcelot wounded 20 Sir Mordred, and he fled with all his might. And then Sir Launcelot returned again unto the queen, and said, Madam, now wit you well all our true love is brought to an end, for now will king Arthur ever be my foe, and therefore, madam, and it like you that I may have you with me, I shall save you from all manner adventures dangerous. That is not best, said the queen, me seemeth now ye have done so much harm, it will be best ye hold you still with this. And if ye see that as to-morn they will put me unto the death, then may ye rescue me as ye think best. I will 30 well, said Sir Launcelot, for have ye no doubt while I am living I shall rescue you. And then he kissed her, and either gave other a ring, and so there he left the queen and went until his lodging.

## CHAPTER II.

*Sir Launcelot rescues the queen.*

*Sir Launcelot and Sir Bors prepare for open war.*

When Sir Bors saw Sir Launcelot, he was never so glad of his home coming as he was then. Mercy, said Sir Launcelot, why be ye all armed? What meaneth this? Sir, said Sir Bors, after that ye were departed from us, we all that be of your blood, and your well willers, were so troubled, that some of us lept out of our beds naked, and some in their dreams caught naked swords in their hands, therefore, said Sir Bors, we deem there is some great strife at hand; and then we all deemed that ye were betrapped with some  
 10 treason, and therefore we made us thus ready, what need that ever ye were in. My fair nephew, said Sir Launcelot unto Sir Bors, now shall ye wit all, that this night I was more harder bested than ever I was in my life, and yet I escaped. And so he told them all how, and in what manner, as ye have heard tofore. And therefore my fellows, said Sir Launcelot, I pray you all that ye will be of good heart in what need soever I stand, for now is war come to us all. Sir, said Sir Bors, all is welcome that God sendeth us, and we have had much weal with you and much worship, and  
 20 therefore we will take the woe with you as we have taken the weal. And therefore they said all, there were many good knights, Look ye take no discomfort, for there nis no band of knights under heaven but that we shall be able to grieve them as much as they may us. And therefore discomfort not yourself by no manner, and ye shall gather together that we love, and that loveth us, and what that ye will have done shall be done. And therefore, Sir Launcelot, said they, we will take the woe with the weal. Gramercy, said Sir Launcelot, of your good comfort, for in my great distress, my  
 30 fair nephew, ye comfort me greatly, and much I am beholden unto you. But this, my fair nephew, I would that ye did in all haste that ye may, or it be forth-days, that ye will

look in their lodging that been lodged here nigh about the king, which will hold with me, and which will not, for now I would know which were my friends from my foes. Sir, said Sir Bors, I shall do my pain, and, or it be seven of the clock, I shall wit of such as ye have said before, who will hold with you.

So two and twenty knights drew them together; and by then they were armed on horseback, and promised Sir Launcelot to do what he would. Then there fell to them, what of Northgalis and of Cornwall, for Sir Lamorak's 10 sake and for Sir Tristram's sake, to the number of a four-score knights.

My lords, said Sir Launcelot, wit you well I have been, ever since I came into this country, well willed unto my lord king Arthur, and unto my lady queen Guenever, unto my power, and this night, because my lady the queen sent for me to speak with her, I suppose it was made by treason, howbeit I dare largely excuse her person, notwithstanding I was there by a forecast nigh slain, but, as God provided me, I escaped all their malice and treason. And then that noble 20 knight, Sir Launcelot, told them all how he was hard bested in the queen's chamber, and how and in what manner he escaped from them. And therefore, said Sir Launcelot, wit you well, my fair lords, I am sure there nis but war unto me and mine. And for because I have slain this night these knights, I wot well as is Sir Agravaine Sir Gawaine's brother, and at the least twelve of his fellows, for this cause now I am sure of mortal war, for these knights were sent and ordained by king Arthur to betray me, and therefore the king will in this heat and malice 30 judge the queen to the fire, and that may I not suffer, that she should be burnt for my sake. For, and I may be heard and suffered, and so taken, I will fight for the queen, that she is a true lady unto her lord. But the king in his heat I dread me will not take me as I ought to be taken.



*They determine to rescue the queen.*

- My lord Sir Launcelot, said Sir Bors, by mine advice ye shall take the woe with the weal, and take it in patience, and thank God of it. And sithen it is fallen as it is, I counsel you keep yourself, for, and ye will yourself, there is no fellowship of knights christened that shall do you wrong. Also I will counsel you, my lord Sir Launcelot, that and my lady queen Guenever be in distress, insomuch as she is in pain for your sake, that ye knightly rescue her : and ye did other ways, all the world will speak of you shame to the
- 10 world's end, insomuch as ye were taken with her, whether ye did right or wrong. It is now your part to hold with the queen, that she be not slain and put to a mischievous death, for, and she so die, the shame shall be yours. Jesu defend me from shame, said Sir Launcelot, and keep and save my lady the queen from villainy and shameful death, and that she never be destroyed in my default : wherefore, my fair lords, my kin and my friends, what will ye do ? Then they said all, We will do as ye will do. I put this to you, said Sir Launcelot, that if my lord Arthur by evil counsel will
- 20 to-morn in his heat put my lady the queen to the fire, there to be burnt,—now, I pray you, counsel me what is best to do ? Then they said all at once with one voice, Sir, us thinketh best, that ye knightly rescue the queen ; insomuch as she shall be burnt, it is for your sake, and it is to suppose, and ye might be handled, ye should have the same death, or a more shamefuller death ; and, sir, we say all, that ye have many times rescued her from death for other men's quarrels, us seemeth it is more your worship that ye rescue the queen from this peril, insomuch she hath it for your sake.
- 30 Then Sir Launcelot stood still, and said, My fair lords, wit you well, I would be loth to do that thing that should dishonour you or my blood, and wit you well, I would be loth that my lady the queen should die a shameful death, but and it be so that ye will counsel me to rescue her, I must do much harm or I rescue her, and peradventure I shall there destroy some of my best friends, that should much repent

me : and peradventure there be some, and they could well bring it about, or disobey my lord king Arthur, they would soon come to me, the which I were loth to hurt : and if so be that I rescue her, where shall I keep her ? That shall be the least care of us all, said Sir Bors : how did the noble knight Sir Tristram by your good will ? Kept not he with him La Beale Isoud near three year in Joyous Gard, the which was done by your elders' device, and that same place is your own, and in likewise may ye do, and ye list, and take the queen lightly away, if it so be the king will judge her to be 10 burnt, and in Joyous Gard ye may keep her long enough, until the heat of the king be past. And then shall ye bring again the queen to the king with great worship, and then, peradventure, ye shall have thank for her bringing home, and love and thank where other shall have maugre. That is hard to do, said Sir Launcelot, for by Sir Tristram I may have a warning. For when by means of treaties Sir Tristram brought again La Beale Isoud unto king Mark from Joyous Gard, look what befell on the end, how shamefully that false traitor king Mark slew him as he sat harping 20 afore his lady La Beale Isoud, with a grounden glaive he thrust him in behind to the heart. It grieveth me, said Sir Launcelot, to speak of his death, for all the world may not find such a knight. All this is truth, said Sir Bors, but there is one thing shall courage you and us all. ye know well that king Arthur and king Mark were never like of conditions, for there was never yet man that could prove king Arthur untrue of his promise. So, to make short tale, they were all consented that for better or for worse, if so were that the queen were on that morn brought to the fire, 30 shortly they all would rescue her. And so by the advice of Sir Launcelot they put them all in an enbushment in a wood as nigh Carlisle as they might. And there they abode still to wit what the king would do.

Now turn we again unto Sir Mordred, that when he was escaped from the noble knight Sir Launcelot, he anon gat

*The queen  
is con-  
demned to  
the fire.*

his horse and mounted upon him, and rode unto king Arthur, sore wounded and smitten, and all for-bled. And there he told the king all how it was, and how they were all slain save himself all only. Mercy, how may this be, said the king; took ye him in the queen's chamber? Yea, truly, said Sir Mordred, there we found him unarmed, and there he slew Colgrevice, and armed him in his armour. And all this he told the king, from the beginning to the ending. Ah, mercy, said the king, he is a marvellous knight of  
10 prowess. Alas, me sore repenteth, said the king, that ever Sir Launcelot should be against me. Now I am sure the noble fellowship of the Round Table is broken for ever, for with him will many a noble knight hold: and now it is fallen so, said the king, that I may not with my worship but the queen must suffer the death. So then there was made great ordinance in this heat, that the queen must be judged to the death. And the law was such in those days, that whatsoever they were, of what estate or degree, if they were found guilty of treason, there should be none other remedy  
20 but death, and either the men or the taking with the deed should be causer of their hasty judgment. And right so was it ordained for queen Guenever, because Sir Mordred was escaped sore wounded, and the death of thirteen knights of the Round Table:—these proofs and experiences caused king Arthur to command the queen to the fire, there to be burnt.

Then spake Sir Gawaine and said: My lord Arthur, I would counsel you not to be over hasty, but that ye would put it in respite, this judgment of my lady the queen, for  
30 many causes. One it is, though it were so that Sir Launcelot were found in the queen's chamber, yet it might be that he came thither for none evil, for ye know, my lord, said Sir Gawaine, that the queen is much beholden unto Sir Launcelot, more than unto any other knight, for oft-times he hath saved her life, and done battle for her when all the court refused the queen, and, peradventure, she sent for him for

goodness and for none evil, to reward him for his good deeds that he had done to her in time past. And, peradventure, my lady the queen sent for him to that intent that Sir Launcelot should come to her good grace privily and secretly, weening to her that it was best so to do, in eschewing and dreading of slander. For oft-times we do many things that we ween it be for the best, and yet, peradventure, it turneth to the worst. For I dare say, said Sir Gawaine, that my lady your queen is to you both good and true. And as for Sir Launcelot, said Sir Gawaine, I dare 10 say he will make it good upon any knight living that will put upon himself villainy or shame, and in likewise he will make good for my lady dame Guenever. That I believe well, said king Arthur, but I will not that way with Sir Launcelot, for he trusteth so much upon his hands and his might that he doubteth no man, and therefore for my queen he shall never fight more, for she shall have the law. And if I may get Sir Launcelot, wit ye well he shall have a shameful death. Jesu defend, said Sir Gawaine, that I may never see it. Why say ye so? said king Arthur, for sooth ye 20 have no cause to love Sir Launcelot, for this night last past he slew your brother Sir Agravaine, a full good knight, and also almost he had slain your other brother Sir Mordred; and also there he slew thirteen noble knights; and also, Sir Gawaine, remember ye he slew two sons of yours, Sir Florence and Sir Lovel. My lord, said Sir Gawaine, of all this I have knowledge, of whose deaths I repent me sore, but insomuch I gave them warning, and told my brethren and my sons aforehand, what would fall in the end, inso- 30 much they would not do by my counsel I will not meddle me thereof, nor revenge me nothing of their deaths, for I told them it was no bote to strive with Sir Launcelot; howbeit I am sorry of the death of my brethren and of my sons, for they are the causers of their own death. For oft-times I warned my brother Sir Agravaine, and I told him the perils the which be now fallen.

*Sir Gawaine  
refuses to  
be present  
at the  
burning.*

Then said the noble king Arthur to Sir Gawaine, Dear nephew, I pray you make you ready in your best armour, with your brethren Sir Gaheris and Sir Gareth, to bring my queen to the fire, there to have her judgment, and receive the death. Nay, my most noble lord, said Sir Gawaine, that will I never do, for, wit you well, I will never be in that place where so noble a queen as is my lady dame Guenever shall take a shameful end. For wit you well, said Sir Gawaine, my heart will never serve me to see her die, 10 and it shall never be said that even I was of your counsel of her death. Then, said the king to Sir Gawaine, suffer your brothers Sir Gaheris and Sir Gareth to be there. My lord, said Sir Gawaine, wit you well they will be loth to be there present, because of many adventures the which be like there to fall, but they are young and full unable to say you nay. Then spake Sir Gaheris and the good knight Sir Gareth unto Sir Arthur, Sir, ye may well command us to be there, but wit you well it shall be sore against our will ; but and we be there by your strait commandment, ye shall plainly hold 20 us there excused, we will be there in peaceable wise, and bear none harness of war upon us. In the name of God, said the king, then make you ready, for she shall soon have her judgment anon. Alas, said Sir Gawaine, that ever I should endure to see this woeful day. So Sir Gawaine turned him, and wept heartily, and so he went into his chamber.

*Sir Launcelot  
rescues  
the queen,*

And then the queen was led forth without Carlisle, and there she was despoiled into her smock. And so then her ghostly father was brought to her, to be shriven of her misdeeds. Then was there weeping, and wailing, and wringing 30 of hands, of many lords and ladies. But there were but few in comparison that would bear any armour for to strength the death of the queen. Then was there one, that Sir Launcelot had sent unto that place for to espy what time the queen should go unto her death. And anon, as he saw the queen despoiled into her smock, and so shriven, then he gave Sir Launcelot warning. Then was there but spurring and

plucking up of horses, and right so they came to the fire, and who that stood against them, there they were slain, there might none withstand Sir Launcelot, so all that bare arms and withstood them, there were they slain—full many a noble knight.

And so in this rashing and hurling as Sir Launcelot thrang here and there, it mishapped him to slay Gaheris and Sir Gareth, the noble knight, for they were unarmed and unaware, for, as the French book saith, Sir Launcelot smote Sir Gareth and Sir Gaheris upon the brain pans, where 10 through they were slain in the field, howbeit in very truth Sir Launcelot saw them not, and so were they found dead among the thickest of the press. Then when Sir Launcelot had thus done and slain, and put to flight all that would withstand him, then he rode straight unto dame Guenever, and made a kirtle and a gown to be cast upon her, and then he made her to be set behind him, and prayed her to be of good cheer. Wit you well the queen was glad that she was escaped from the death, and then she thanked God and Sir Launcelot. And so he rode his way with the 20 queen, as the French book saith, unto Joyous Gard, and there he kept her as a noble knight should do, and many great lords and some kings sent Sir Launcelot many good knights, and many noble knights drew unto Sir Launcelot. When this was known openly, that king Arthur and Sir Launcelot were at debate, many knights were glad of their debate, and many were full heavy of their debate.

*and un-  
aware  
slays Sir  
Gaheris  
and Sir  
Gareth.*

### CHAPTER III.

*How king Arthur laid siege to the castle of Joyous Gard.*

So turn we again unto king Arthur, that when it was told him how, and in what manner of wise the queen was taken away from the fire, and when he heard of the death 30 of his noble knights, and in especial for Sir Gaheris' and

*King  
Arthur is  
sore dis-  
tressed.*

Sir Gareth's death, then the king swooned for pure sorrow. And when he awoke of his swoon, then he said, Alas that ever I bare crown upon my head, for now have I lost the fairest fellowship of noble knights that ever held christian king together. Alas, my good knights be slain away from me, now within these two days I have lost forty knights and also the noble fellowship of Sir Launcelot, and his blood, for now I may never hold them together no more with my worship. Alas, that ever this war  
10 began.

Then there came one unto Sir Gawaine, and told him how the queen was led away with Sir Launcelot, and nigh a twentyfour knights slain. O Jesu defend my brethren, said Sir Gawaine, for full well wist I that Sir Launcelot would rescue her, or else he would die in that field; and to say the truth he had not been a man of worship, had he not rescued the queen that day, in so much she should have been burnt for his sake: and as in that, said Sir Gawaine, he hath done but knightly, and  
20 as I would have done myself, and I had stood in like case. But where are my brethren? said Sir Gawaine, I marvel I hear not of them. Truly, said that man, Sir Gareth and Sir Gaheis be slain. Jesu defend, said Sir Gawaine, for all the world I would not that they were slain, and in especial my good brother Sir Gareth. Sir, said the man, he is slain, and that is great pity. Who slew him? said Sir Gawaine. Sir, said the man, Launcelot slew them both. That may I not believe, said Sir Gawaine, that he slew my brother Sir Gareth, for I dare say my  
30 brother Gareth loved him better than me and all his brethren, and the king both. Also I dare say, and Sir Launcelot had desired my brother Sir Gareth with him, he would have been with him against the king and us all, and therefore I may never believe that Sir Launcelot slew my brother. Sir, said this man, it is noised that he slew him.

Alas, said Sir Gawaine, now is my joy gone. And then he fell down and swooned, and long he lay there as he had been dead. And then when he arose of his swoon, he cried out sorrowfully and said, Alas! And right so Sir Gawaine ran to the king crying and weeping, O king Arthur, mine uncle, my good brother Sir Gareth is slain and so is my brother Sir Gaheris, the which were two noble knights. Then the king wept and he both, and so they fell on swooning. And when they were revived, then spake Sir Gawaine. Alas, my lord, how slew he my 10 brother Sir Gareth? mine own good lord, I pray you tell me. Truly, said the king, I shall tell you as it is told me, Sir Launcelot slew him and Sir Gaheris both. Alas, said Sir Gawaine, they bare none arms against him, neither of them both. I wot not how it was, said the king, but, as it is said, Sir Launcelot slew them both in the thickest of the press, and knew them not; and therefore let us shape a remedy for to revenge their deaths. My king, my lord, and mine uncle, said Sir Gawaine, wit you well, now I shall make you a promise that I shall 20 hold by my knighthood, that from this day I shall never fail Sir Launcelot, until the one of us have slain the other: and therefore I require you, my lord and king, dress you to the war, for wit you well I will be revenged upon Sir Launcelot, and therefore, as ye will have my service and my love, now haste you thereto, and assay your friends. For I promise unto God, said Sir Gawaine, for the death of my brother Sir Gareth I shall seek Sir Launcelot throughout seven kings' realms but I shall slay him, or else he shall slay me. Ye shall not need to 30 seek him so far, said the king, for, as I hear say, Sir Launcelot will abide me and you in the Joyous Gard, and much people draweth unto him as I hear say. That may I believe, said Sir Gawaine, but my lord, he said, assay your friends, and I will assay mine. It shall be done, said the king, and, as I suppose, I shall be

*Sir Gawaine will never forgive Sir Launcelot for the death of his brothers.*



big enough to draw him out of the biggest tower of his castle.

*The king  
lays siege  
to Joyous  
Gard.*

So then the king sent letters and writs throughout all England, both in the length and the breadth, for to assummon all his knights. And so unto Arthur drew many knights, dukes, and earls, so that he had a great host. And when they were assembled, the king informed them all how Sir Launcelot had bereft him his queen. Then the king and all his host made them ready to lay siege about  
10 Sir Launcelot, where he lay within Joyous Gard. Thereof heard Sir Launcelot, and purveyed him of many good knights, for with him held many knights, and some for his own sake, and some for the queen's sake. Thus they were on both parties well furnished and garnished of all manner of things that longed to the war. But king Arthur's host was so big that Sir Launcelot would not abide him in the field, for he was full loth to do battle against the king; but Sir Launcelot drew him to his strong castle with all manner of victual, and as many  
20 noble men as he might suffice within the town and the castle. Then came king Arthur with Sir Gawaine, with an huge host, and laid a siege all about Joyous Gard, both at the town and at the castle, and there they made strong war on both parties. But in no wise Sir Launcelot would ride out nor go out of his castle of long time, neither he would none of his good knights to issue out, neither none of the town nor of the castle, until fifteen weeks were past.

*The parley.*

Then it befell upon a day in harvest time, Sir Launcelot looked over the walls, and spake on high unto king  
30 Arthur and Sir Gawaine. My lords both, wit ye well all is in vain that ye make at this siege, for here win ye no worship, but maugre and dishonour, for and it list me to come myself out, and my good knights, I should full soon make an end of this war. Come forth, said Arthur unto Launcelot, and thou darest, and I promise

thee I shall meet thee in midst of the field. God defend me, said Sir Launcelot, that ever I should encounter with the most noble king that made me knight. Fie upon thy fair language, said the king, for wit you well, and trust it, I am thy mortal foe, and ever will to my death day, for thou hast slain my good knights and full noble men of my blood, that I shall never recover again : also thou hast dishonoured my queen, and holden her many winters, and sithen like a traitor taken her from me by force. My most noble lord and king, said Sir Launcelot, ye may say 10 what ye will, for ye wot well with yourself I will not strive, but there as ye say I have slain your good knights, I wot well that I have done so, and that me sore repenteth, but I was enforced to do battle with them, in saving of my life, or else I must have suffered them to have slain me. And as for my lady queen Guenever, except your person of your highness, and my lord Sir Gawaine, there is no knight under heaven that dare make it good upon me, that ever I was traitor unto your person. Fie on thee, false recreant knight, said Sir 20 Gawaine, I let thee wit my lord mine uncle king Arthur shall have his queen and thee, maugre thy visage, and slay you both whether it please him. It may well be, said Sir Launcelot, but wit ye well, my lord Sir Gawaine, and me list to come out of this castle, ye should win me and the queen more harder than ever ye wan a strong battle. Fie on thy proud words, said Sir Gawaine ; as for my lady the queen, I will never say of her shame, but thou false and recreant knight, said Sir Gawaine, what cause hadst thou to slay my good brother Sir Gareth, 30 that loved thee more than all my kin ? Alas, thou madest him knight with thine own hands ; why slewest thou him that loved thee so well ? For to excuse me, said Sir Launcelot, it helpeth me not, but by the faith that I owe to the high order of knighthood, I should with as good will have slain my nephew Sir Bors de

*Sir Ga-  
waine  
defies Sir  
Launcelot*

Ganis at that time : but alas, that ever I was so unhappy, said Launcelot, that I had not seen Sir Gareth and Sir Gaheris. Thou liest, recreant knight, said Sir Gawaine, thou slewest him in despite of me : and therefore wit thou well I shall make war to thee, and all the while that I may live.

And then Sir Gawaine made many men to blow upon Sir Launcelot, and all at once they called him False recreant knight ! Then when Sir Bors de Ganis, Sir Ector  
10 de Maris, and Sir Lionel heard this outcry, they called to them Sir Palomides, Sir Safir's brother, and Sir Lavaine, with many more of their blood, and all they went unto Sir Launcelot, and said thus, My lord Sir Launcelot, wit ye well we have great scorn of the great rebukes that we heard Gawaine say to you ; wherefore we pray you and charge you, as ye will have our service, keep us no longer within these walls, for wit you well, plainly, we will ride into the field, and do battle with them. For ye fare as a man that were afeard, and for all your fair speech it will  
20 not avail you. For wit you well, Sir Gawaine will not suffer you to be accorded with king Arthur ; and therefore fight for your life, and your right, and ye dare. Alas, said Sir Launcelot, for to ride out of this castle and to do battle, I am full loth. Then Sir Launcelot spake on high unto Sir Arthur and Sir Gawaine, My lords, I require you and beseech you, sithen that I am thus required and conjured to ride into the field, that neither you my lord king Arthur, nor you Sir Gawaine, come not into the field. What shall we do then ? said  
30 Sir Gawaine, is this the king's quarrel with thee to fight ? and it is my quarrel to fight with thee Sir Launcelot, because of the death of my brother Sir Gareth. Then must I needs unto battle, said Sir Launcelot ; now wit you well, my lord Arthur, and Sir Gawaine, ye will repent it whensoever I do battle with you.

*The battle.*

And so then they departed either from other, and then

either party made them ready on the morn for to do battle, and great purveyance was made on both sides. And Sir Gawaine let purvey many knights for to wait upon Sir Launcelot for to overset him, and to slay him. And on the morn at undorne Sir Arthur was ready in the field with three great hosts, and then Sir Launcelot's fellowship came out at three gates, in a full good array. And Sir Lionel came in the foremost battle, and Sir Launcelot came in the middle, and Sir Bors came out at the third gate. Thus they came in order and rule as full noble knights. 10 And always Sir Launcelot charged all his knights in any wise to save king Arthur and Sir Gawaine.

Then came forth Sir Gawaine from the king's host, and he came before and proffered to just, and Sir Lionel was a fierce knight, and lightly he encountered with Sir Gawaine, and there Sir Gawaine smote Sir Lionel through-out the body, that he dashed to the earth like as he had been dead. And then Sir Ector de Maris and other more bare him into the castle. Then began a great stoure, and much people was slain, and ever Sir Launcelot did 20 what he might to save the people on king Arthur's party. And ever king Arthur was nigh about Sir Launcelot to have slain him, and Sir Launcelot suffered him, and would not strike again. So Sir Bors encountered with king Arthur, and there with a spear Sir Bors smote him down; and so he alight and drew his sword, and said to Sir Launcelot, Shall I make an end of this war? and that he meant to have slain king Arthur. Not so hardy, said Sir Launcelot, upon pain of thy head, that thou touch him no more: for I will never see that most noble king, 30 that made me knight, neither slain ne shamed. And therewithal Sir Launcelot alight off his horse, and took up the king, and horsed him again, and said thus, My lord Arthur, for God's love stint this strife, for ye get here no worship and I would do mine utterance, but always I forbear you, and ye, nor none of yours, forbeareth

*Of the  
great  
courtesy  
that was  
in Sir  
Launcelot.*

me : my lord remember what I have done in many places, and now I am evil rewarded.

Then when king Arthur was on horseback, he looked upon Sir Launcelot, and then the tears brast out of his eyes, thinking on the great courtesy that was in Sir Launcelot, more than in any other man. And therewith the king rode his way, and might no longer behold him, and said, Alas, that ever this war began ! And then either parties of the battles withdrew them to repose  
10 them, and buried the dead, and to the wounded men they laid soft salves, and thus they endured that night till on the morn, and on the morn by undorne they made them ready to do battle. And then Sir Bors led the forward. So upon the morn there came Sir Gawaine as brim as any boar, with a great spear in his hand, and when Sir Bors saw him, he thought to revenge his brother Sir Lionel of the despite that Sir Gawaine did him the other day. And so they that knew either other feathered their spears, and with all their mights of their  
20 horses and themselves they met together so felonously that either bare other through, and so they fell both to the earth ; and then the battles joined, and there was much slaughter on both parties. Then Sir Launcelot rescued Sir Bors, and sent him into the castle. But neither Sir Gawaine nor Sir Bors died not of their wounds ; for they were all holpen. Then Sir Lavaine and Sir Urre prayed Sir Launcelot to do his pain, and fight as they had done :—For we see ye forbear and spare, and that doth much harm, therefore we pray you spare not  
30 your enemies no more than they do you. Alas, said Sir Launcelot, I have no heart to fight against my lord Arthur, for ever me seemeth I do not as I ought to do. My lord, said Sir Palomides, though ye spare them all this day they will never give you thank ; and if they may get you at avail ye are but dead. So then Sir Launcelot understood that they said him truth, and then

he strained himself more than he did aforehand, and because his nephew Sir Bors was sore wounded. And then within a little while, by even-song time, Sir Launcelot and his party better stood, for their horses went in blood past the fetlocks, there was so much people slain. And then, for pity, Sir Launcelot withheld his knights, and suffered king Arthur's party for to withdraw them on side. And then Sir Launcelot's party withdrew them into his castle, and either party buried the dead bodies and put salve unto the wounded men. So when Sir Gawaine 10 was hurt, they on king Arthur's party were not so orgulous as they were toforehand to do battle.

## CHAPTER IV.

*How the Pope sent down his bulls to make peare, and how Sir Launcelot brought the queen to king Arthur.*

Of this war was noised through all Christendom, and at the last it was noised afore the Pope; and he considering the great goodness of king Arthur and of Sir Launcelot, that was called the most noblest knights of the world, wherefore the Pope called unto him a noble clerk, that at that time was there present,—the French book saith it was the bishop of Rochester—and the Pope gave him 20 bulls under lead unto king Arthur of England, charging him upon pain of interdicting of all England, that he take his queen dame Guenever unto him again, and accord with Sir Launcelot.

So when this bishop was come to Carlisle he shewed the king these bulls. And when the king understood these bulls, he nist what to do: full fain he would have been accorded with Sir Launcelot, but Sir Gawaine would not suffer him; but as for to have the queen, thereto he agreed. But in no wise Sir Gawaine would not suffer

the king to accord with Sir Launcelot, but as for the queen he consented. And then the bishop had of the king his great seal, and his assurance, as he was a true anointed king, that Sir Launcelot should come safe and go safe, and that the queen should not be spoken unto, of the king, nor of none other, for no thing done afore time past. And of all these appointments the bishop brought with him sure assurance and writing, to shew Sir Launcelot. So when the bishop was come to Joyous Gard, there he  
10 shewed Sir Launcelot how the Pope had written to Arthur and unto him, and there he told him the perils if he withheld the queen from the king. It was never in my thought, said Launcelot, to withhold the queen from my lord Arthur; but in so much she should have been dead for my sake, me seemeth it was my part to save her life, and put her from that danger till better recover might come. And now I thank God, said Sir Launcelot, that the Pope hath made her peace; for God knoweth, said Sir Launcelot, I will be a thousand fold more gladder  
20 to bring her again than ever I was of her taking away,—with this, I may be sure to come safe and go safe, and that the queen shall have her liberty as she had before, and never for no thing that hath been surmised afore this time, she never from this day stand in no peril, for else, said Sir Launcelot, I dare adventure me to keep her from an harder shower than ever I kept her. It shall not need you, said the bishop, to dread so much: for wit you well the Pope must be obeyed; and it were not the Pope's worship nor my poor honesty to wit you distressed,  
30 neither the queen, neither in peril nor shamed. And then he shewed Sir Launcelot all his writing, both from the Pope and from king Arthur. This is sure enough, said Sir Launcelot, for full well I dare trust my lord's own writing and his seal, for he was never shamed of his promise.

*Sir Launcelot brings back the queen,*

Therefore, said Sir Launcelot unto the bishop, ye shall ride unto the king afore, and recommend me unto his good

grace, and let him have knowledging that this same day eight days, by the grace of God, I myself shall bring my lady queen Guenever unto him. And then say ye unto my most redoubted king, that I will say largely for the queen, that I shall none except for dread, nor fear, but the king himself, and my lord Sir Gawaine, and that is more for the king's love than for himself. So the bishop departed, and came to the king at Carlisle, and told him all how Sir Launcelot answered him; and then the tears brast out of the king's eyes. Then Sir Launcelot pur-  
veyed him an hundred knights, and all were clothed in green velvet, and their horses trapped to their heels, and every knight held a branch of olive in his hand in tokening of peace, and the queen had four and twenty gentlewomen following her in the same wise, and Sir Launcelot had twelve coursers following him, and on every courser sat a young gentleman, and all they were arrayed in green velvet, with sarpys of gold about their quarters, and the horse trapped in the same wise down to the heels with many ouches, set with stones and pearls in gold, to the  
number of a thousand; and she and Sir Launcelot were clothed in white cloth of gold tissue, and right so as ye have heard, as the French book maketh mention, he rode with the queen from Joyous Gard to Carlisle, and so Sir Launcelot rode throughout Carlisle, and so in the castle, that all men might behold and wit you well there was many a weeping eye. And then Sir Launcelot himself alight, and avoided his horse, and took the queen, and so led her where king Arthur was in his seat, and Sir Gawaine sat afore him, and many other great lords. So when Sir  
Launcelot saw the king and Sir Gawaine, then he led the queen by the arm, and then he kneeled down, and the queen both. Wit you well, then was there many bold knights there with king Arthur that wept as tenderly as though they had seen all their kin afore them. So the king sat still, and said no word. And when Sir Launce-



lot saw his countenance, he arose and pulled up the queen with him, and thus he spake full knightly :—

*and makes  
his defence  
to the king*

My most redoubted king, ye shall understand, by the Pope's commandment, and yours, I have brought to you my lady the queen, as right requireth; and if there be any knight, of whatsoever degree that he be, except your person, that will say or dare say but that she is true to you, I here myself, Sir Launcelot du Lake, will make it good upon his body that she is a true lady unto you: but 10 liars ye have listened, and that has caused debate betwixt you and me. For time hath been, my lord Arthur, that ye have been greatly pleased with me, when I did battle for my lady your queen; and full well ye know my most noble king, that she hath been put to great wrong or this time, and sithen, it pleased you at many times that I should fight for her, me seemeth, my good lord, I had more cause to rescue her from the fire, insomuch she should have been burnt for my sake. For they that told you those tales were liars, and so it fell upon them. For, by 20 likelihood, had not the might of God been with me, I might never have endured fourteen knights, and they armed and afore purposed, and I unarmed and not purposed; for I was sent for unto my lady your queen, I wot not for what cause, but I was not so soon within the chamber door, but anon Sir Agravaine and Sir Mordred called me traitor and recreant knight. They called thee right, said Sir Gawaine. My lord Sir Gawaine, said Sir Launcelot, in their quarrel they proved themselves not in the right. Well, well, Sir Launcelot, said king Arthur, I 30 have given thee no cause to do to me as thou hast done, for I have worshipped thee and thine more than any of all my knights. My good lord, said Sir Launcelot, so ye be not displeased, ye shall understand I and mine have done you oft better service than any other knights have done in many divers places; and where ye have been full hard bested divers times, I have myself rescued you from

many dangers, and ever unto my power I was glad to please you, and my lord Sir Gawaine both, in justs and tournaments, and in battles set, both on horseback and on foot, I have often rescued you, and my lord Sir Gawaine, and many more of your knights in many divers places. And therefore, said Sir Launcelot unto Sir Gawaine, me seemeth ye ought of right for to remember this : for and I might have your good will, I would trust to God to have my lord Arthur's good grace.

The king may do as he will, said Sir Gawaine, but wit thou well, Sir Launcelot, thou and I shall never be accorded while we live, for thou hast slain three of my brethren, and twain of them ye slew traitorly and piteously, for they bare none harness against thee, nor none would bear. God would they had been armed, said Sir Launcelot, for then had they been on live. And wit ye well, Sir Gawaine, as for Sir Gareth, I love none of my kinsmen so much as I did him, and ever while I live, said Sir Launcelot, I will bewail Sir Gareth's death, not all only for the great fear that I have of you, but many causes causen me to be 20 sorrowful. One is, for I made him knight ; another is, I wot well he loved me above all other knights ; and the third is, he was passing noble, true, courteous, and gentle, and well conditioned ; the fourth is, I wist well, anon as I heard that Sir Gareth was dead, I should never after have your love, but everlasting war betwixt us ; and also I wist well that ye would cause my noble lord Arthur for ever to be my mortal foe, and as Jesu be my help, said Sir Launcelot, I slew never Sir Gareth nor Sir Gaheris by my will, but alas, that ever they were unarmed that un- 30 happy day. But thus much I shall offer me, said Sir Launcelot, if it may please the king's good grace, and you, my lord Sir Gawaine : I shall first begin at Sandwich, and there I shall go in my shirt, barefoot, and at every ten miles end I will found, and cause to make an house of religion, of what order that ye will assign me, with an whole

*Sir Ga-  
waine  
refuses to be  
accorded  
with Sir  
Launcelot.*

convent to sing and read day and night in especial for Sir Gareth's sake and Sir Gaheris. And this shall I perform from Sandwich unto Carlisle; and every house shall have sufficient livelihood, and this shall I perform while I have any livelihood in Christendom, and there is none of all these religious places, but they shall be performed, furnished and garnished in all things as an holy place ought to be, I promise you faithfully. And this, Sir Gawaine, me thinketh were more fairer, holier, and more better to  
10 their souls, than ye my most noble king, and you, Sir Gawaine, to war upon me, for thereby shall ye get none avail. Then all knights and ladies that were there wept as they were mad, and the tears fell on king Arthur's cheeks.

*Sir Launcelot is banished from the realm.*

Sir Launcelot, said Sir Gawaine, I have right well heard thy speech, and thy great proffers, but wit thou well, let the king do as it pleaseth him, I will never forgive my brothers' death, and in especial the death of my brother Sir Gareth: and if mine uncle, king Arthur,  
20 will accord with thee, he shall lose my service: for wit thou well, thou art both false to the king and to me. Sir, said Sir Launcelot, he beareth not the life that may make that good, and if that ye, Sir Gawaine, will charge me with so high a thing, ye must pardon me, for then needs must I answer you. Nay, said Sir Gawaine, we are past that at this time, and that caused the Pope, for he hath charged mine uncle the king, that he shall take his queen again, and to accord with thee, Sir Launcelot, as for this season, and therefore thou shalt go safe, as thou camest.  
30 But in this land thou shalt not abide past fifteen days, such summons I give you;—so the king and we were consented and accorded, or thou camest hither; and else, said Sir Gawaine, wit thou well, that thou shouldest not have come here, but if it were maugre thy head. And if it were not for the Pope's commandment, said Sir Gawaine, I should do battle with mine own body against thy body

and prove it upon thee that thou hast been both false unto mine uncle king Arthur, and to me both, and that shall I prove upon thy body when thou art departed from hence, wheresoever I find thee.

Then Sir Launcelot sighed, and therewith the tears fell on his cheeks, and then he said thus : Alas, most noble christian realm, whom I have loved above all other realms, and in thee have I gotten a great part of my worship, and now I shall depart in this wise. Truly me repenteth that ever I came in this realm that should be thus shamefully banished, 10 undeserved and causeless. But fortune is so variant, and the wheel so movable, there is no constant abiding, and that may be proved by many old chronicles of noble Hector, and Troilus, and Alisander the mighty conqueror, and many other more. When they were most in their royalty, they alight lowest ; and so fareth by me, said Sir Launcelot, for in this realm I had worship, and by me and mine all the whole Round Table hath been increased more in worship by me and my blood than by any other. And therefore wit thou well, Sir Gawaine, I may live upon my lands as well as 20 any knight that here is. And if ye, most redoubted king, will come upon my lands with Sir Gawaine, to war upon me, I must endure you as well as I may. But as to you, Sir Gawaine, if that ye come there, I pray you charge me not with treason nor felony, for, and ye do, I must answer you. Do thou thy best, said Sir Gawaine, therefore hie thee fast that thou were gone, and wit thou well we shall soon come after, and break the strongest castle that thou hast upon thy head. That shall not need, said Sir Launcelot, for and I were as orgulous set as ye are, wit ye well I should meet 30 with you in midst of the field. Make thou no more language, said Sir Gawaine, but deliver the queen from thee, and pyke thee lightly out of this court. Well, said Sir Launcelot, and I had wist of this short coming, I would have advised me twice or that I had come hither ; for and the queen had been so dear to me as ye noise her, I durst have

kept her from the fellowship of the best knights under heaven

*Sir Launcelot takes his leave of the queen.*

- And then Sir Launcelot said unto Guenever, in hearing of the king and them all, Madam, now I must depart from you and this noble fellowship for ever; and sithen it is so, I beseech you to pray for me, and say me well, and if ye be hard bestad by any false tongues, lightly, my lady, let send me word, and if any knight's hands may deliver you by battle, I shall deliver you. And therewithal
- 10 Sir Launcelot kissed the queen, and then he said all openly, Now let see what he be in this place, that dare say the queen is not true unto my lord Arthur: let see who will speak, and he dare speak. And therewith he brought the queen to the king, and then Sir Launcelot took his leave and departed; and there was neither king, duke ne earl, baron ne knight, lady nor gentlewoman, but all they wept as people out of their mind, except Sir Gawaine; and when the noble Sir Launcelot took his horse, to ride out of Carlisle, there was sobbing and weeping for pure dole of his departing;
- 20 and so he took his way unto Joyous Gard, and then ever after he called it the Dolorous Gard. And thus departed Sir Launcelot from the court for ever.

*Sir Launcelot calls his fellowship unto him at Joyous Gard,*

- And so when he came to Joyous Gard, he called his fellowship unto him, and asked them what they would do. Then they answered all wholly together with one voice, they would as he would do. My fair fellows, said Sir Launcelot, I must depart out of this most noble realm, and now I shall depart it grieveth me sore, for I shall depart with no worship. For a banished man departed never out of
- 30 no realm with no worship, and that is my heaviness, for ever I fear after my days that they shall chronicle upon me that I was banished out of this land; and else, my fair lords, be ye sure, and I had not dread shame, my lady queen Guenever and I should never have departed. Then spake many noble knights, as Sir Palomides, Sir Safir his brother, and Sir Bellangere le Beuse, and Sir Urre with Sir Lavaine, with

many other, Sir, and ye be so disposed to abide in this country, we will never fail you ; and if ye list not to abide in this land, there is none of the good knights that here be will fail you, for many causes. One is, all we that be not of your blood shall never be welcome to the court. And sithen it liked us to take a part with you in your distress and heaviness in this realm, wit you well it shall like us as well to go in other countries with you, and there to take such part as ye do. My fair lords, said Sir Launcelot, I well understand you, and, as I can, thank you : and ye shall 10 understand such livelihood, as I am born unto, I shall depart with you, in this manner of wise, that is for to say, I shall depart all my livelihood and all my lands freely among you, and I myself will have as little as any of you, for have I sufficient that may long to my person, I will ask none other rich array ; and I trust to God to maintain you on my lands as well as ever were maintained any knights. Then spake all the knights at once, He have shame that will leave you ; for we all understand in this realm will be now no quiet, but ever strife and debate, now the fellowship of the Round 20 Table is broken ; for by the noble fellowship of the Round Table was king Arthur upborne, and by their nobleness the king and all his realm was in quiet and in rest. And a great part, they said all, was because of your nobleness.

Truly, said Sir Launcelot, I thank you all of your good saying, howbeit I wot well, in me was not all the stability of this realm. But in that I might I did my devoir, and well, I am sure, I knew many rebellions in my days that by me were appeased ; and I trow we all shall hear of them in short space, and that me sore repenteth. 30 For ever I dread me, said Sir Launcelot, that Sir Mordred will make trouble, for he is passing envious, and applieth him to trouble. So they were accorded to go with Sir Launcelot to his lands. And to make short tale, they trussed, and paid all that would ask them. And wholly an hundred knights departed with Sir Launcelot at

*and after-  
ward sails  
to Benwick*

once, and made their avows they would never leave him for weal nor for woe; and so they shipped at Cardiff, and sailed unto Benwick: some men call it Bayonne, and some men call it Beaume, where the wine of Beaume is.

## CHAPTER V.

### *The Siege of Benwick.*

*King  
Arthur  
passes over  
the sea and  
lays waste  
Sir Laun-  
celot's  
lands,*

So leave we Sir Launcelot in his lands, and his noble knights with him, and return we again unto king Arthur and to Sir Gawaine, that made a great host ready, to the number of threescore thousand, and all thing was made ready for their shipping to pass over the sea; and so they shipped at Cardiff. And there king Arthur made Sir Mordred chief ruler of all England, and also he put queen Guenever under his governance; because Sir Mordred was king Arthur's son, he gave him the rule of his land, and of his wife, and so king Arthur passed over the sea and landed upon Sir Launcelot's lands, and there he burnt and wasted, through the vengeance of Sir Gawaine, all that they might overrun. When this word came to Sir Launcelot, that king Arthur and Sir Gawaine were landed upon his lands, and made a full destruction and waste, then spake Sir Bors and said, My lord Sir Launcelot, it is shame that we suffer them thus to ride over our lands, for wit you well, suffer ye them as long as ye will, they will do you no favour, and they may handle you. Then said Sir Lionel, that was ware and wise, My lord Sir Launcelot, I will give you this counsel, let us keep our strong walled towns until they have hunger and cold, and blow on their nails, and then let us freshly set upon them, and shred them down as sheep in a field, that aliens may take ensample for ever how they land upon our lands. Then spake king Bagdemagus

to Sir Launcelot, Sir, your courtesy will shend us all, and thy courtesy hath waked all this sorrow: for, and they thus over our lands ride, they shall by process bring us all to nought, while we thus in holes us hide. Then said Sir Galihud unto Sir Launcelot, Sir, here be knights come of kings' blood that will not long droop and they are without these walls, therefore give us leave, like as we be knights, to meet them in the field, and we shall slay them, that they shall curse the time that ever they came into this country. Then spake seven brethren of North 10 Wales, and they were seven noble knights, a man might seek in seven lands or he might find such seven knights: then they all said at once, Sir Launcelot, let us out ride with Sir Galihud, for we be never wont to cower in castles nor in noble towns.

Then spake Sir Launcelot, that was master and governor of them all, My fair lords, wit you well I am full loth to ride out with my knights, for shedding of christian blood; and yet my lands I understand be full bare to sustain any host a while, for the mighty wars that 20 whilom made king Claudas upon this country, upon my father king Ban, and on mine uncle king Bors; howbeit we will as at this time keep our strong walls. And then his noble knights strode about him, and said, Sir Launcelot, wherefore make ye such cheer: think what ye are, and what men we are, and let us noble knights match them in midst of the field. That may be lightly done, said Sir Launcelot, but I was never so loth to do battle, and therefore, I pray you, fair sirs, as ye love me, be ruled as I will have you, for I will 30 always flee that noble king that made me knight. And when I may no farther, I must needs defend me, and that will be more worship for me, and us all, than to compare with that noble king whom we have all served. Then they held their language, and as that night they took their rest. And upon the morn, early, in the

*but Sir  
Launcelot  
refuses to  
attack the  
king.*



dawning of the day, as knights looked out, they saw the city of Benwick besieged round about, and fast they began to set up ladders. And then they defied them out of the town, and beat them from the walls mightily.

*Sir  
Gawaine  
challenges  
Sir Laun-  
celot,*

Then it befell upon a day, Sir Gawaine came before the gates armed at all pieces, on a noble horse, with a great spear in his hand, and then he cried with a loud voice, Where art thou now, thou false traitor, Sir Launcelot? Why hidest thou thyself within holes and walls like a  
10 coward? Look out now, thou false traitor knight, and here I shall revenge upon thy body the death of my three brethren. All this language heard Sir Launcelot every deal, and his kin and his knights drew about him, and all they said at once to Sir Launcelot, Sir Launcelot, now must ye defend you like a knight, or else ye be shamed for ever: for now ye be called upon treason, it is time for you to stir, for ye have slept over long, and suffered over much. So God me help, said Sir Launcelot, I am right heavy of Sir Gawaine's words, for now  
20 he charged me with a great charge; and therefore I wot it as well as ye, that I must defend me, or else to be recreant. Then Sir Launcelot bade saddle his strongest horse, and bad let fetch his arms, and bring all unto the gate of the tower. And then Sir Launcelot spake on high unto king Arthur, and said, My lord Arthur, and noble king that made me knight, wit you well I am right heavy for your sake, that ye thus sue upon me, and always I forbear you, for, and I would have been vengeable, I might have met you in midst of the field,  
30 and there to have made your boldest knights full tame: and now I have forborne half a year, and suffered you and Sir Gawaine to do what ye would do, and now I may endure it no longer, now must I needs defend myself, insomuch Sir Gawaine hath appealed me of treason,—the which is greatly against my will, that ever I should fight against any of your blood; but now I may not

forsake it, I am driven thereto as a beast till a bay. Then Sir Gawaine said, Sir Launcelot, and thou dardest do battle, leave thy babbling and come off, and let us ease our hearts. Then Sir Launcelot armed him lightly, and mounted upon his horse. And either of the knights gat great spears in their hands, and the host without stood still all apart, and the noble knights came out of the city by a great number, insomuch that when Arthur saw the number of men and knights he marvelled, and said to himself, Alas, that ever Sir Launcelot was against me, for now 10 I see he hath forborne me. And so the covenant was made, there should no man nigh them, nor deal with them, till the one were dead or yelden.

Then Sir Gawaine and Sir Launcelot departed a great way in sunder, and then they came together with all their horses' might as they might run, and either smote other in midst of their shields, but the knights were so strong, and their spears so big, that their horses might not endure their buffets, and so the horses fell to the earth. And then they avoided their horses, and dressed 20 their shields afore them. Then they stood together, and gave many sad strokes on divers places of their bodies, that the blood brast out on many sides and places. Then had Sir Gawaine such a grace and gift that an holy man had given to him, that every day in the year, from underne till high noon, his might increased those three hours, as much as thrice his strength, and that caused Sir Gawaine to win great honour. And for his sake king Arthur made an ordinance that all manner of battles for any quarrels that should be done before king Arthur, should begin 30 at underne, and all was done for Sir Gawaine's love, that by likelihood if that Sir Gawaine were on the one part he should have the better in battle, while his strength endured three hours, but there were but few knights that time living that knew this advantage that Sir Gawaine had, but king Arthur all only.

*and is  
overcome  
by him in  
single  
combat.*

Thus Sir Launcelot fought with Sir Gawaine, and when Sir Launcelot felt his might evermore increase, Sir Launcelot wondered, and dread him sore to be shamed. For, as the French book saith, Sir Launcelot wend, when he felt Sir Gawaine double his strength, that he had been a fiend and no earthly man, wherefore Sir Launcelot traced and traversed, and covered himself with his shield, and kept his might and his breath during three hours: and that while Sir Gawaine gave him many sad  
10 brunts and many sad strokes, that all the knights that beheld Sir Launcelot marvelled how he might endure him, but full little understood they that travail, that Sir Launcelot had for to endure him. And then when it was past noon, Sir Gawaine had no more but his own might. Then Sir Launcelot felt him so come down; then he stretched him up, and stood near Sir Gawaine, and said thus, My Lord Sir Gawaine, now I feel ye have done, now my lord Sir Gawaine I must do my part, for many great and grievous strokes I have endured you this day  
20 with great pain. Then Sir Launcelot doubled his strokes, and gave Sir Gawaine such a buffet on the helmet, that he fell down on his side, and Sir Launcelot withdrew him from him. Why withdrawest thou thee? said Sir Gawaine; now turn again, false traitor knight, and slay me; for and thou leave me thus, when I am whole I shall do battle with thee again.—I shall endure you, sir, by God's grace, but wit thou well, Sir Gawaine, I will never smite a felled knight. And so Sir Launcelot went into the city, and Sir Gawaine was borne into one of king Arthur's pavilions,  
30 and leeches were brought to him, and searched and salved with soft ointments. And then Sir Launcelot said, Now have good day, my lord the king, for, wit you well, ye win no worship at these walls; and if I would my knights out bring, there should many a man die. Therefore, my lord Arthur, remember you of old kindness, and however I fare Jesu be your guide in all places.

Alas, said the king, that ever this unhappy war was begun, for ever Sir Launcelot forbearth me in all places, and in likewise my kin, and that is seen well this day by my nephew Sir Gawaine. Then king Arthur fell sick for sorrow of Sir Gawaine, that he was sore hurt, and because of the war betwixt him and Sir Launcelot. So then they on king Arthur's party kept the siege with little war withoutforth, and they withinforth kept their walls, and defended them when need was. Thus as this siege endured, and as Sir Gawaine lay sick near a month, and 10 when he was well recovered, and ready within three days to do battle again with Sir Launcelot, right so came tidings unto Arthur from England, that made king Arthur and all his host to remove.

*Tidings  
from  
England  
cause  
Arthur to  
return.*

## PART V.

### OF THE DEATH OF KING ARTHUR AND QUEEN GUENEVER AND OF THE DEATH OF SIR LAUNCELOT.

#### CHAPTER I.

*How Sir Mordred presumed and took on him to be king of  
England, and of the death of Sir Gawaine.*

As Sir Mordred was ruler of all England, he did do make letters as though that they came from beyond the sea, and the letters specified that king Arthur was slain in battle with Sir Launcelot. Wherefore Sir Mordred made a Parliament, and called the lords together, and there he made them to choose him king, and so was he crowned at 20 Canterbury, and held a feast there fifteen days, and after-

*Sir Mor-  
dred rebels.*

ward he drew him unto Winchester, and there he took the queen Guenever, and said plainly, that he would wed her which was his uncle's wife, and his father's wife. And so he made ready for the feast, and a day prefixed that they should be wedded; wherefore queen Guenever was passing heavy. But she durst not discover her heart, but spake fair, and agreed to Sir Mordred's will. Then she desired of Sir Mordred for to go to London, to buy all manner of things that longed unto the wedding. And  
10 because of her fair speech Sir Mordred trusted her well enough, and gave her leave to go. And so when she came to London, she took the tower of London, and suddenly, in all haste possible, she stuffed it with all manner of victual, and well garnished it with men, and so kept it. Then when Sir Mordred wist and understood how he was beguiled, he was passing wroth out of measure. And a short tale for to make, he went and laid a mighty siege about the tower of London, and made many great assaults thereat, and threw many great engines unto them, and  
20 shot great guns. But all might not prevail Sir Mordred, for queen Guenever would never, for fair speech nor for foul, would never trust to come in his hands again.

*The bishop  
curses Sir  
Mordred.*

And then came the bishop of Canterbury, the which was a noble clerk and an holy man, and thus he said to Sir Mordred: Sir, what will ye do, will ye first displease God, and sithen shame yourself and all knighthood? Is not king Arthur your uncle, no further but your mother's brother, and are ye not his son, therefore how may ye wed your father's wife? Sir, said the noble clerk, leave  
30 this opinion, or else I shall curse you with book, and bell, and candle. Do thou thy worst, said Sir Mordred, wit thou well I shall defy thee. Sir, said the bishop, and wit you well I shall not fear me to do that me ought to do. Also where ye noise where my lord Arthur is slain, and that is not so, and therefore ye will make a foul work in this land. Peace, thou false priest, said Sir Mordred, for,

and thou chafe me any more, I shall make strike off thy head. So the bishop departed, and did the curse in the most orgulous wise that might be done. And then Sir Mordred sought the bishop of Canterbury for to have slain him. Then the bishop fled, and took part of his goods with him, and went nigh unto Glastonbury, and there he was as priest hermit in a chapel, and lived in poverty and in holy prayers : for well he understood that mischievous war was at hand.

Then Sir Mordred sought on queen Guenever by letters 10 and sondes, and by fair means and foul means, for to have her to come out of the tower of London, but all this availed not, for she answered him shortly, openly and privily, that she had lever slay herself than to be married with him. Then came word to Sir Mordred that king Arthur had raised the siege from Sir Launcelot, and he was coming homeward with a great host, to be avenged upon Sir Mordred. Wherefore Sir Mordred made write writs to all the barony of this land, and much people drew to him. For then was the common voice among 20 them, that with Arthur was none other life but war and strife, and with Sir Mordred was great joy and bliss. Thus was Sir Arthur depraved and evil said of. And many there were that king Arthur had made up of nought, and given them lands, might not then say of him a good word.

Lo ye, all Englishmen, see ye not what a mischief here was, for he that was the most king and knight of the world, and most loved the fellowship of noble knights, and by him they were all upholden, now might not 30 we Englishmen hold us content with him. Lo, thus was the old custom and usage of this land. And also men say, that we of this land have not yet lost nor forgotten that custom and usage. Alas, this is a great default of us Englishmen, for there may no thing please us no term. And so fared the people at that time ; they

were better pleased with Sir Mordred than they were with king Arthur, and much people drew unto Sir Mordred, and said they would abide with him for better and for worse. And so Sir Mordred drew with a great host to Dover, for there he heard say that Sir Arthur would arrive, and so he thought to beat his own father from his lands. And the most party of all England held with Sir Mordred, the people were so new fangle.

*King  
Arthur  
lands at  
Dover, and  
Sir Ga-  
waine is  
mortally  
wounded.*

And so as Sir Mordred was at Dover with his host, there  
 10 came king Arthur with a great navy of ships, galleys, and  
 carracks. And there was Sir Mordred ready awaiting upon  
 his landage, to let his own father to land upon the land  
 that he was king over. Then there was launching of  
 great boats and small, and full of noble men of arms,  
 and there was much slaughter of gentle knights, and many  
 a full bold baron was laid full low on both parties. But  
 king Arthur was so courageous, that there might no  
 manner of knights let him to land, and his knights fiercely  
 followed him. And so they landed, maugre Sir Mordred  
 20 and all his power, and put Sir Mordred aback, that he  
 fled and all his people. So when this battle was done,  
 king Arthur let bury his people that were dead, and then  
 was the noble knight Sir Gawaine found in a great boat  
 lying more than half dead. When Sir Arthur wist that  
 Sir Gawaine was laid so low, he went unto him, and there  
 the king made sorrow out of measure, and took Sir  
 Gawaine in his arms, and thrice he there swooned. And  
 when he awaked he said, Alas, Sir Gawaine, my sister's  
 son, here now thou liest, the man in the world that I  
 30 loved most, and now is my joy gone : for now, my nephew  
 Sir Gawaine, I will discover me unto your person ; in Sir  
 Launcelot and you I most had my joy, and mine affiance,  
 and now have I lost my joy of you both, wherefore all  
 mine earthly joy is gone from me. Mine uncle king  
 Arthur, said Sir Gawaine, wit you well, my death-day  
 is come, and all is through mine own hastiness and wil-

fulness, for I am smitten upon the old wound the which Sir Launcelot gave me, on the which I feel well I must die, and had Sir Launcelot been with you as he was, this unhappy war had never begun, and of all this am I causer, for Sir Launcelot and his blood through their prowess held all your cankered enemies in subjection and danger: and now, said Sir Gawaine, ye shall miss Sir Launcelot. But, alas, I would not accord with him, and therefore, said Sir Gawaine, I pray you, fair uncle, that I may have paper, pen, and ink, that I may write to Sir 10 Launcelot a schedule with mine own hands.

. And then when paper and ink was brought, then Gawaine was set up weakly by king Arthur, for he was shriven a little tofore, and then he wrote thus, as the French book maketh mention,—Unto Sir Launcelot, flower of all noble knights that ever I heard of, or saw by my days, I Sir Gawaine, king Lot's son, of Orkney, sister's son unto the noble king Arthur, send thee greeting, and let thee have knowledge, that the tenth day of May I was smitten upon the old wound that thou gavest me afore the 20 city of Benwick, and through the same wound that thou gavest me I am come to my death-day. And I will that all the world wit that I, Sir Gawaine, knight of the Table Round, sought my death, and not through thy deservings, but it was mine own seeking, wherefore I beseech thee, Sir Launcelot, to return again unto this realm, and see my tomb, and pray some prayer, more or less, for my soul. And this same day that I wrote this schedule, I was hurt to the death in the same wound, the which I had of thy hand, Sir Launcelot. For of a more nobler man 30 might I not be slain. Also, Sir Launcelot, for all the love that ever was betwixt us, make no tarrying, but come over the sea in all haste, that thou mayest with thy noble knights rescue that noble king that made thee knight, that is my lord Arthur, for he is full straitly bestad with a false traitor, that is my half brother, Sir

*Before his  
death Sir  
Gawaine  
writes a  
schedule  
to Sir  
Launcelot.*



Mordred, and he hath let crown him king, and would have wedded my lady queen Guenever, and so had he done, had she not put herself in the tower of London. And so the tenth day of May last past, my lord Arthur and we all landed upon them at Dover, and there we put that false traitor Sir Mordred to flight, and there it misfortuned me to be stricken upon thy stroke, and at the date of this letter was written but two hours and an half afore my death, written with mine own hand, and  
10 so subscribed with part of my heart's blood. And I require thee, most famous knight of the world, that thou wilt see my tomb.—And then Sir Gawaine wept, and king Arthur wept, and then they swooned both. And when they awaked both, the king made Sir Gawaine to receive his Saviour. And then Sir Gawaine prayed the king to send for Sir Launcelot, and to cherish him above all other knights. And so at the hour of noon, Sir Gawaine yielded up the spirit. And then the king let inter him in a chapel within Dover castle; and there yet  
20 all men may see the skull of him, and the same wound is seen that Sir Launcelot gave him in battle.

## CHAPTER II.

### *The death of Arthur.*

*The battle  
of Barham  
Down.*

Then was it told king Arthur that Sir Mordred had pitched a new field upon Barham Down. And upon the morn the king rode thither to him, and there was a great battle betwixt them, and much people were slain on both parties. But at the last Sir Arthur's party stood best, and Sir Mordred and his party fled unto Canterbury. And then the king let search all the towns for his knights that were slain, and interred them; and salved them with  
30 soft salves that so sore were wounded. Then much people

drew unto king Arthur. And then they said that Sir Mordred warred upon king Arthur with wrong. And then king Arthur drew him with his host down by the sea side, westward toward Salisbury, and there was a day assigned between king Arthur and Sir Mordred, and they should meet upon a down beside Salisbury, and not far from the sea side, and this day was assigned on a Monday after Trinity Sunday, whereof king Arthur was passing glad, that he might be avenged upon Sir Mordred. Then Sir Mordred araised much people about London, for they of Kent, South- 10  
sex, and Surrey, Estsex, and Southfolk, and of Norfolk, held the most party with Sir Mordred, and many a full noble knight drew unto Sir Mordred and to the king; but they that loved Sir Launcelot drew unto Sir Mordred.

So upon Trinity Sunday at night king Arthur dreamed a wonderful dream, and that was this, that him seemed he sat upon a chaflet in a chair, and the chair was fast to a wheel, and thereupon sat king Arthur in the richest cloth of gold that might be made: and the king thought there was under him, far from him, an hideous deep 20  
black water, and therein were all manner of serpents, and worms, and wild beasts, foul and horrible: and suddenly the king thought the wheel turned up so down, and he fell among the serpents, and every beast took him by a limb. And then the king cried as he lay in his bed and slept, Help! And then knights, squires, and yeomen awaked the king; and then he was so amazed that he wist not where he was. And then he fell on slumbering again, not sleeping nor thoroughly waking. So the king seemed verily that there came Sir Gawaine unto him with a 30  
number of fair ladies with him. And when king Arthur saw him, then he said, Welcome, my sister's son, I wend thou hadst been dead, and now I see thee on live, much am I beholding unto Almighty Jesu. Oh, fair nephew, and my sister's son, what be these ladies that hither be come with you? Sir, said Sir Gawaine, all these be ladies for whom I

*King  
Arthur's  
dream.*

have foughten when I was man living : and all these are those that I did battle for in righteous quarrel. And God hath given them that grace at their great prayer, because I did battle for them, that they should bring me hither unto you, thus much had God given me leave, for to warn you of your death ; for and ye fight as to-morn with Sir Mordred, as ye both have assigned, doubt ye not ye must be slain, and the most part of your people on both parties. And for the great grace and goodness that Almighty Jesu  
 10 hath unto you, and for pity of you and many more other good men there shall be slain, God hath sent me to you, of his special grace, to give you warning, that in no wise ye do battle as to-morn, but that ye take a treaty for a month day ; and proffer you largely, so as to-morn to be put in a delay. For within a month shall come Sir Launcelot, with all his noble knights, and rescue you worshipfully, and slay Sir Mordred and all that ever will hold with him. Then Sir Gawaine and all the ladies vanished.

*A truce is  
proposed.*

And anon the king called upon his knights, squires,  
 20 and yeomen, and charged them wightly to fetch his noble lords and wise bishops unto him. And when they were come, the king told them his vision, what Sir Gawaine had told him, and warned him that if he fought on the morn he should be slain. Then the king commanded Sir Lucan de butlere, and his brother Sir Bedivere, with two bishops with them, and charged them in any wise and they might take a treaty for a month day with Sir Mordred ;—And spare not, proffer him lands and goods, as much as ye think best. So then they departed, and came  
 30 to Sir Mordred, where he had a grim host of an hundred thousand men. And there they intreated Sir Mordred long time, and at the last Sir Mordred was agreed for to have Cornwall and Kent, by king Arthur's days :—after, all England, after the days of king Arthur.

*At the con-  
ference an  
adder  
causes the  
battle to  
begin.*

Then were they condescended that king Arthur and Sir Mordred should meet betwixt both their hosts, and every

each of them should bring fourteen persons. And they came with this word unto king Arthur. Then said he, I am glad that this is done. And so he went into the field. And when Arthur should depart, he warned all his host that and they see any sword drawn, Look ye come on fiercely, and slay that traitor Sir Mordred, for I in no wise trust him. In like wise Sir Mordred warned his host that,—And ye see any sword drawn, look that ye come on fiercely, and so slay all that ever before you standeth: for in no wise I will not trust for this treaty: for I know well my father will be 10 avenged upon me. And so they met as their pointment was, and so they were agreed and accorded thoroughly: and wine was fetched, and they drank. Right so came an adder out of a little heath bush, and it stung a knight on the foot. And when the knight felt him stungen, he looked down and saw the adder, and then he drew his sword to slay the adder, and thought of none other harm. And when the host on both parties saw that sword drawn, then they blew beames, trumpets, and horns, and shouted grimly. And so both hosts dressed them together. 20

And king Arthur took his horse, and said, Alas this unhappy day, and so rode to his party: and Sir Mordred in likewise. And never was there seen a more dolefuller battle in no christian land. For there was but rushing and riding, foining and striking, and many a grim word was there spoken either to other, and many a deadly stroke. But ever king Arthur rode throughout the battle of Sir Mordred many times, and did full nobly as a noble king should: and at all times he fainted never. And Sir Mordred that day put him in devoir, and in 30 great peril. And thus they fought all the long day, and never stinted, till the noble knights were laid to the cold ground, and ever they fought still, till it was near night, and by that time was there an hundred thousand laid dead upon the down. Then was Arthur wroth out of measure, when he saw his people so slain from him. Then the king

*The battle.*

looked about him, and then was he ware of all his host, and of all his good knights, were left no more on live but two knights, that was Sir Lucan de butlere, and his brother Sir Bedivere : and they full were sore wounded. Jesu mercy, said the king, where are all my noble knights becomen. Alas that ever I should see this doleful day. For now, said Arthur, I am come to mine end. But would to God that I wist where were that traitor Sir Mordred, that hath caused all this mischief.

*King  
Arthur  
slays Sir  
Mordred,  
and is  
wounded to  
the death  
by him.*

- 10 Then was king Arthur ware where Sir Mordred leaned upon his sword among a great heap of dead men. Now give me my spear, said Arthur unto Sir Lucan, for yonder I have espied the traitor that all this woe hath wrought. Sir, let him be, said Sir Lucan, for he is unhappy : and if ye pass this unhappy day, ye shall be right well revenged upon him. Good lord, remember ye of your night's dream, and what the spirit of Sir Gawaine told you this night, yet God of his great goodness hath preserved you hitherto. Therefore, for God's sake, my lord, leave off
- 20 by this. For blessed be God ye have won the field : for here we be three on live, and with Sir Mordred is none on live. And if ye leave off now, this wicked day of destiny is past. Tide me death, betide me life, saith the king, now I see him yonder alone, he shall never escape mine hands, for at a better avail shall I never have him. God speed you well, said Sir Bedivere. Then the king gat his spear in both his hands, and ran toward Sir Mordred, crying, Traitor, now is thy death-day come. And when Sir Mordred heard Sir Arthur, he ran until him with his sword drawn in his
- 30 hand. And then king Arthur smote Sir Mordred under the shield, with a foin of his spear throughout the body more than a fathom. And when Sir Mordred felt that he had his death's wound, he thrust himself, with the might that he had, up to the bur of king Arthur's spear. And right so he smote his father Arthur with his sword holden in both his hands, on the side of the head, that

the sword pierced the helmet and the brain-pan, and therewithal Sir Mordred fell stark dead to the earth. And the noble Arthur fell in a swoon to the earth, and there he swooned oft-times.

And Sir Lucan de butlere and Sir Bedivere oft-times heaved him up, and so weakly they led him betwixt them both to a little chapel not far from the sea side. And when the king was there, he thought him well eased. Then heard they people cry in the field. Now go thou, Sir Lucan, said the king, and do me to wit what betokens 10 that noise in the field. So Sir Lucan departed, for he was grievously wounded in many places. And so as he went, he saw and hearkened by the moon-light, how the pillers and robbers were come into the field to pill and to rob many a full noble knight of brooches and beads, of many a good ring, and of many a rich jewel; and who that were not dead all out, there they slew them for their harness and their riches. When Sir Lucan understood this work, he came to the king as soon as he might, and told him all what he had heard and seen. 20 Therefore by mine advice, said Sir Lucan, it is best that we bring you to some town. I would it were so, said the king, but I may not stand, my head werches so. Ah, Sir Launcelot, said king Arthur, this day have I sore missed thee. Alas, that ever I was against thee, for now have I my death, whereof Sir Gawaine me warned in my dream. Then Sir Lucan took up the king the one part, and Sir Bedivere the other part, and in the lifting, the king swooned, and Sir Lucan fell in a swoon with the lift, and therewith the noble knight's heart brast. And when 30 king Arthur came to himself again, he beheld Sir Lucan how he lay foaming at the mouth. Alas, said the king, this is unto me a full heavy sight to see this noble duke so die for my sake, for he would have holpen me that had more need of help than I. Alas, he would not complain him, his heart was so set to help me. Now Jesu have

*Sir Lucan  
and Sir  
Bedivere  
carry king  
Arthur to  
a chapel.*

mercy upon his soul. Then Sir Bedivere wept for the death of his brother.

*Sir Bedivere and the sword Excalibur.*

Leave this mourning and weeping, said the king, for all this will not avail me: for, wit thou well, and I might live myself the death of Sir Lucan would grieve me evermore; but my time hieth fast, said the king. Therefore, said Arthur, take thou Excalibur, my good sword, and go with it to yonder water side, when thou comest there, I charge thee throw my sword in that water, 10 and come again, and tell me what thou there seest. My lord, said Bedivere, your commandment shall be done, and lightly bring you word again. So Sir Bedivere departed, and by the way he beheld that noble sword, that the pommel and haft were all of precious stones, and then he said to himself, If I throw this rich sword in the water, thereof shall never come good, but harm and loss. And then Sir Bedivere hid Excalibur under a tree. And as soon as he might he came again unto the king, and said he had been at the water, and had 20 thrown the sword into the water. What saw thou there? said the king. Sir, he said, I saw nothing but waves and winds. That is untruly said of thee, said the king; therefore go thou lightly again, and do my command as thou art to me lief and dear, spare not, but throw it in. Then Sir Bedivere returned again, and took the sword in his hand; and then him thought sin and shame to throw away that noble sword; and so eft he hid the sword, and returned again, and told to the king that he had been at the water, and done his command- 30 ment. What saw thou there? said the king. Sir, he said, I saw nothing but the waters wap and the waves wan. Ah traitor, untrue, said King Arthur, now hast thou betrayed me twice. Who would have wend that thou that hast been to me so lief and dear, and thou art named a noble knight, and would betray me for the riches of the sword. But now go again lightly, for thy long

tarrying putteth me in great jeopardy of my life, for I have taken cold. And but if thou do now as I bid thee, if ever I may see thee, I shall slay thee with mine own hands, for thou wouldest for my rich sword see me dead.

Then Sir Bedivere departed, and went to the sword, and lightly took it up, and went to the water side, and there he bound the girdle about the hilts, and then he threw the sword as far into the water as he might, and there came an arm and an hand above the water, and met it, 10 and caught it, and so shook it thrice and brandished, and then vanished away the hand with the sword in the water. So Sir Bedivere came again to the king, and told him what he saw. Alas, said the king, help me hence, for I dread me I have tarried over long.

Then Sir Bedivere took the king upon his back, and so went with him to that water side. And when they were at the water side, even fast by the bank hoved a little barge, with many fair ladies in it, and among them all was a queen, and all they had black hoods, and all 20 they wept and shrieked when they saw king Arthur. Now put me into the barge, said the king: and so he did softly. And there received him three queens with great mourning, and so they set him down, and in one of their laps king Arthur laid his head, and then that queen said, Ah, dear brother, why have ye tarried so long from me? Alas, this wound on your head hath caught over much cold. And so then they rowed from the land; and Sir Bedivere beheld all those ladies go from him. Then Sir Bedivere cried, Ah, my lord Arthur, what shall become of me now ye go from 30 me, and leave me here alone among mine enemies. Comfort thyself, said the king, and do as well as thou mayest, for in me is no trust for to trust in. For I will into the vale of Avilion, to heal me of my grievous wound. And if thou hear never more of me, pray for my soul. But ever the queens and the ladies wept and shrieked, that it was

*Sir Bedi-  
vere places  
Arthur in  
a barge  
which bears  
him from  
the land.*



pity to hear. And as soon as Sir Bedivere had lost the sight of the barge, he wept and wailed, and so took the forest, and so he went all that night, and in the morning he was ware betwixt two holts hoar of a chapel and an hermitage.

*King  
Arthur's  
tomb.*

Then was Sir Bedivere glad, and thither he went; and when he came into the chapel, he saw where lay an hermit groveling on all four, there fast by a tomb was new graven. When the hermit saw Sir Bedivere, he  
10 knew him well, for he was but a little before bishop of Canterbury, that Sir Mordred banished. Sir, said Sir Bedivere, what man is there interred that ye pray so fast for? Fair son, said the hermit, I wot not verily, but by deeming. But this night, at midnight, here came a number of ladies, and brought hither a dead corpse, and prayed me to bury him; and here they offered an hundred tapers, and gave me an hundred besants. Alas, said Sir Bedivere, that was my lord king Arthur, that here lieth buried in this chapel! Then Sir Bedivere swooned, and  
20 when he awoke he prayed the hermit he might abide with him still there, to live with fasting and prayers. For from hence will I never go, said Sir Bedivere, by my will, but all the days of my life here to pray for my lord Arthur. Ye are welcome to me, said the hermit, for I know you better than ye ween that I do. Ye are the bold Bedivere, and the full noble duke Sir Lucan de butlere was your brother. Then Sir Bedivere told the hermit all as ye have heard tofore. So there bode Sir Bedivere with the hermit, that was tofore bishop of Canterbury, and  
30 there Sir Bedivere put upon him poor clothes, and served the hermit full lowly in fasting and in prayers.

Thus of Arthur I find never more written in books that be authorized, nor more of the certainty of his death heard I never tell, but thus was he led away in a ship wherein were three queens; that one was king Arthur's sister queen Morgan le Fay; the other was the queen

of Northgalis; the third was the queen of the Waste Lands. Also there was Nimue, the chief Lady of the lake, that had wedded Pelleas the good knight; and this lady had done much for king Arthur; for she would never suffer Sir Pelleas to be in no place where he should be in danger of his life, and so he lived to the uttermost of his days with her in great rest. More of the death of king Arthur could I never find, but that ladies brought him to his burials; and such one was buried there, that the hermit bare witness that some time was bishop of 10 Canterbury, but yet the hermit knew not in certain that he was verily the body of king Arthur;—for this tale Sir Bedivere, knight of the Round Table, made it to be written.

Yet some men yet say in many parts of England that king Arthur is not dead, but had by the will of our Lord Jesu in another place. And men say that he shall come again, and he shall win the holy cross. I will not say it shall be so, but rather I will say, here in this world he changed his life. But many men say that there is 20 written upon his tomb this verse,

*Hic iacet Arthurus Rex quondam Rexque futurus.*

Thus leave I here Sir Bedivere with the hermit, that dwelled that time in a chapel beside Glastonbury, and there was his hermitage. And so they lived in their prayers and fastings and great abstinence.

And when queen Guenever understood that king Arthur was slain, and all the noble knights, Sir Mordred and all the remnant, then the queen stole way, and five ladies with her, and so she went to Almesbury, and there she 30 let make herself a nun, and wore white clothes and black, and great penance she took, as ever did sinful lady in this land, and never creature could make her merry, but lived in fasting, prayers, and alms-deeds, that all manner of people marvelled how virtuously she was changed. Now

*Queen  
Guenever  
becomes a  
nun at  
Almesbury*

leave we queen Guenever in Almesbury a nun in white clothes and black, and there she was abbess and ruler, as reason would ; and turn we from her, and speak we of Sir Launcelot du Lake.

## CHAPTER III.

*Of Sir Launcelot's return and of the death of Guenever.*

*The grief  
of Sir  
Launcelot.*

And when he heard in his country that Sir Mordred was crowned king in England, and made war against king Arthur his own father, and would let him to land in his own land ; also it was told Sir Launcelot how that Sir Mordred had laid siege about the tower of London, because the queen would not wed him ; then was Sir Launcelot wroth out of measure, and said to his kinsmen, Alas, that double traitor Sir Mordred, now me repenteth that ever he escaped my hands, for much shame hath he done unto my lord Arthur. For all I feel by the doleful letter that my lord Gawaine sent me, on whose soul Jesu have mercy, that my lord Arthur is right hard bested. Alas, said Sir Launcelot, that ever I should live to hear that most noble king, that made me knight, thus to be overset with his subject in his own realm. And this doleful letter that my lord Sir Gawaine hath sent me afore his death, praying me to see his tomb, wit you well his doleful words shall never go from mine heart. For he was a full noble knight as ever was born, and in an unhappy hour was I born, that ever I should have that unhap to slay first Sir Gawaine, Sir Gaheris the good knight, and mine own friend Sir Gareth, that full noble knight. Alas, I may say I am unhappy, said Sir Launcelot, that ever I should do thus unhappily ; and, alas, yet might I never have hap to slay that traitor Sir Mordred. Leave your complaints, said Sir Bors, and first revenge you of

the death of Sir Gawaine, and it will be well done that ye see Sir Gawaine's tomb, and secondly that ye revenge my lord Arthur and my lady queen Guenever. I thank you, said Sir Launcelot, for ever ye will my worship.

Then they made them ready in all the haste that might be, with ships and galleys with Sir Launcelot and his host, to pass into England. And so he passed over the sea till he came to Dover : and there he landed with seven kings, and the number was hideous to behold. Then Sir Launcelot enquired of men of Dover where was king 10 Arthur become? Then the people told him how that he was slain, and Sir Mordred and an hundred thousand died on a day, and how Sir Mordred gave king Arthur there the first battle at his landing, and there was good Sir Gawaine slain, and on the morn Sir Mordred fought with the king upon Barham Down, and there the king put Sir Mordred to the worse. Alas, said Sir Launcelot, this is the heaviest tidings that ever came to me. Now, fair sirs, said Sir Launcelot, shew me the tomb of Sir Gawaine. And then certain people of the town brought 20 him into the castle of Dover, and showed him the tomb. Then Sir Launcelot kneeled down and wept and prayed heartily for his soul. And that night he made a dole, and all they that would come had as much flesh, fish, wine, and ale, and every man and woman had twelve pence, come who would. Thus with his own hand dealt he his money in a mourning gown ; and ever he wept, and prayed them to pray for the soul of Sir Gawaine. And on the morn all the priests and clerks that might be gotten in the country were there, and sung mass of 30 Requiem. And there offered first Sir Launcelot, and he offered an hundred pound, and then the seven kings offered forty pound a piece, and also there was a thousand knights, and each of them offered a pound, and the offering dured from morn till night. And Sir Launcelot lay two nights on his tomb in prayers and in weeping.

*Sir  
Launcelot  
returns to  
England,*

*and finds  
queen  
Guenever  
in the  
nunnery.*

Then on the third day Sir Launcelot called the kings, dukes, earls, barons and knights, and said thus: My fair lords, I thank you all of your coming into this country with me; but we come too late, and that shall repent me while I live, but against death may no man rebel. But sithen it is so, said Sir Launcelot, I will myself ride and seek my lady queen Guenever, for as I hear say, she hath great pain and much disease, and I heard say that she is fled into the west country, therefore ye  
 10 all that abide me here, and but if I come again within fifteen days, then take your ships, and your fellowship, and depart into your country. For I will do as I say to you. Then came Sir Bors de Ganis, and said, My lord Sir Launcelot, what think ye for to do, now to ride in this ealm? wit thou well ye shall find few friends. Be as be may, said Sir Launcelot, keep you still here, for I will forth on my journey, and no man nor child shall go with me. So it was no boot to strive, but he departed and rode westerly, and there he sought a seven or eight days,  
 20 and at the last he came to a nunnery, and then was queen Guenever ware of Sir Launcelot as he walked in the cloister, and when she saw him there she swooned thrice, that all the ladies and gentlewomen had work enough to hold the queen up. So when she might speak, she called ladies and gentlewomen to her, and said, Ye marvel, fair ladies, why I make this fare. Truly, she said, it is for the sight of yonder knight that yonder standeth: wherefore, I pray you all, call him to me.

*Sir Laun-  
celot and  
queen  
Guenever  
take their  
leave of  
each other.*

When Sir Launcelot was brought to her, then she said  
 30 to all the ladies, Through this man and me hath all this war been wrought, and the death of the most noblest knights of the world; for through our love that we have loved together is my most noble lord slain. Therefore, Sir Launcelot, wit thou well I am set in such a plight to get my soul's health; and yet I trust, through God's grace, that after my death to have a sight of the blessed face

of Christ, and at doomsday to sit on his right side, for as sinful as ever I was are saints in heaven. Therefore, Sir Launcelot, I require thee and beseech thee heartily, for all the love that ever was betwixt us, that thou never see me more in the visage ; and I command thee on God's behalf, that thou forsake my company, and to thy kingdom thou turn again and keep well thy realm from war and wrake. For as well as I have loved thee, mine heart will not serve me to see thee ; for through thee and me is the flower of kings and knights destroyed. Therefore, 10 Sir Launcelot, go to thy realm, and there take thee a wife, and live with her with joy and bliss, and I pray thee heartily pray for me to our Lord, that I may amend my mis-living.

Now, sweet madam, said Sir Launcelot, would ye that I should return again unto my country, and there to wed a lady? Nay, madam, wit you well that shall I never do : for I shall never be so false to you of that I have promised, but the same destiny that ye have taken you to, I will take me unto, for to please Jesu, and ever for 20 you I cast me specially to pray. If thou wilt do so, said the queen, hold thy promise ; but I may never believe but that thou wilt turn to the world again. Well, madam said he, ye say as pleaseth you, yet wist you me never false of my promise, and God defend but I should forsake the world as ye have done. For in the quest of the Sancgreall I had forsaken the vanities of the world, had not your lord been. And if I had done so at that time with my heart, will, and thought, I had passed all the knights that were in the Sancgreall, except Sir 30 Galahad my son. And therefore, lady, sithen ye have taken you to perfection, I must needs take me to perfection of right. For I take record of God, in you I have had mine earthly joy. And if I had found you now so disposed I had cast me to have had you into mine own realm. But sithen I find you thus disposed, I insure you

faithfully I will ever take me to penance, and pray while my life lasteth, if that I may find any hermit either grey or white that will receive me. Wherefore, madam, I pray you kiss me, and never no more. Nay, said the queen, that shall I never do, but abstain you from such works. And they departed.

But there was never so hard an hearted man, but he would have wept to see the dolour that they made. For there was lamentation as they had been stung with spears, 10 and many times they swooned. And the ladies bare the queen to her chamber, and Sir Launcelot awoke, and went and took his horse, and rode all that day and all that night in a forest, weeping.

*Sir  
Launcelot  
becomes a  
hermit.*

And at the last he was ware of an hermitage and a chapel stood betwixt two cliffs, and then he heard a little bell ring to mass, and thither he rode and alight, and tied his horse to the gate, and heard mass. And he that sang mass was the bishop of Canterbury. Both the bishop and Sir Bedivere knew Sir Launcelot, and they 20 spake together after mass. But when Sir Bedivere had told his tale all whole, Sir Launcelot's heart almost brast for sorrow, and Sir Launcelot threw his arms abroad, and said, Alas, who may trust this world! And then he kneeled down on his knees and prayed the bishop to shrive him and assoil him. And then he besought the bishop that he might be his brother. Then the bishop said, I will gladly; and there he put an habit upon Sir Launcelot, and there he served God day and night with prayers and fastings.

*Sir Bors  
also  
becomes a  
hermit.*

30 Thus the great host abode at Dover. And then Sir Lionel took fifteen lords with him, and rode to London to seek Sir Launcelot. And there Sir Lionel was slain and many of his lords. Then Sir Bors de Ganis made the great host for to go home again. And Sir Bors, Sir Ector de Maris, Sir Blamor, Sir Bleoberis, with more other of Sir Launcelot's kin, took on them to ride all

England overthwart and endlong, to seek Sir Launcelot. So Sir Bors by fortune rode so long till he came to the same chapel where Sir Launcelot was. And so Sir Bors heard a little bell knell that rang to mass, and there he alight, and heard mass. And when mass was done, the bishop, Sir Launcelot, and Sir Bedivere came to Sir Bors. And when Sir Bors saw Sir Launcelot in that manner clothing, then he prayed the bishop that he might be in the same suit. And so there was an habit put upon him, and there he lived in prayers and fasting. And within 10 half a year there was come Sir Galihud, Sir Galihodin, Sir Blamor, Sir Bleoberis, Sir Williards, Sir Clarrus, and Sir Gahalantine. So all these seven noble knights there abode still. And when they saw Sir Launcelot had taken him unto such perfection, they had no list to depart, but took such an habit as he had. Thus they endured in great penance six year, and then Sir Launcelot took the habit of priesthood, and a twelvemonth he sang mass. And there was none of these other knights but they read in books, and help to sing mass, and rang bells, and did 20 bodily all manner of service. And so their horses went where they would, for they took no regard of no worldly riches. For when they saw Sir Launcelot endure such penance, in prayers and fasting, they took no force what pain they endured, for to see the noblest knight of the world take such abstinence that he waxed full lean.

And thus upon a night there came a vision to Sir Launcelot, and charged him, in remission of his sins, to haste him unto Almesbury,—And by then thou come there, thou shalt find queen Guenever dead: and 30 therefore take thy fellows with thee, and purvey them of an horse bier, and fetch thou the corpse of her, and bury her by her husband the noble king Arthur. So this vision came to Launcelot thrice in one night.

Then Sir Launcelot rose up or day, and told the hermit. It were well done, said the hermit, that ye made you

*The death  
of queen  
Guenever.*



ready, and that ye disobey not the vision. Then Sir Launcelot took his seven fellows with him, and on foot they went from Glastonbury to Almesbury, the which is little more than thirty miles. And thither they came within two days, for they were weak and feeble to go. And when Sir Launcelot was come to Almesbury, within the nunnery, queen Guenever died but half an hour before. And the ladies told Sir Launcelot that queen Guenever told them all, or she passed, that Sir Launcelot  
10 had been priest near a twelvemonth.—And hither he cometh as fast as he may to fetch my corpse: and beside my lord king Arthur he shall bury me. Wherefore the queen said in hearing of them all, I beseech almighty God that I may never have power to see Sir Launcelot with my worldly eyes. And thus, said all the ladies, was ever her prayer these two days, till she was dead. Then Sir Launcelot saw her visage, but he wept not greatly, but sighed. And so he did all the observance of the service himself, both the Dirige, and on the morn he sang  
20 mass.

*She is  
buried at  
Glaston-  
bury.*

And there was ordained an horse bier; and so with an hundred torches ever burning about the corpse of the queen, and ever Sir Launcelot with his eight fellows went about the horse bier singing and reading many an holy orison, and frankincense upon the corpse incensed. Thus Sir Launcelot and his eight fellows went on foot from Almesbury unto Glastonbury; and when they were come to the chapel and the hermitage, there she had a Dirige with great devotion. And on the morn  
30 the hermit, that sometime was bishop of Canterbury, sang the mass of Requiem with great devotion: and Sir Launcelot was the first that offered, and then all his eight fellows. And then she was wrapped in cired cloth of Raines, from the top to the toe in thirty fold, and after she was put in a web of lead, and then in a coffin of marble. And when she was put in the earth, Sir

Launcelot swooned, and lay long still, while the hermit came out and awaked him, and said, Ye be to blame, for ye displease God with such manner of sorrow making. Truly, said Sir Launcelot, I trust I do not displease God, for He knoweth mine intent, for my sorrow was not, nor is not, for any rejoicing of sin, but my sorrow may never have end. For when I remember of her beauty, and of her noblesse, that was both with her king and with her; so when I saw his corpse and her corpse so lie together, truly mine heart would not serve to sustain my careful 10 body. Also when I remember me, how by my default, mine orgule, and my pride, that they were both laid full low, that were peerless that ever was living of christian people, wit you well, said Sir Launcelot, this remembered, of their kindness and mine unkindness, sank so to my heart, that I might not sustain myself. So the French book maketh mention.

#### CHAPTER IV.

*How Sir Launcelot began to sicken, and died.*

Then Sir Launcelot never after eat but little meat, nor drank, till he was dead; for then he sickened more and more, and dried and dwined away; for the bishop nor 20 none of his fellows might not make him to eat, and little he drank, that he was waxen by a cubit shorter than he was, that the people could not know him; for evermore day and night he prayed, but sometime he slumbered a broken sleep, and ever he was lying groveling on the tomb of king Arthur and queen Guenever. And there was no comfort that the bishop, nor Sir Bors, nor none of his fellows could make him, it availed not. So within six weeks after, Sir Launcelot fell sick, and lay in his bed; and then he sent for the bishop that there was hermit, 30 and all his true fellows. Then Sir Launcelot said with

dreary voice, Sir bishop, I pray you give to me all my rights that longeth to a christian man. It shall not need you, said the hermit and all his fellows, it is but heaviness of your blood: ye shall be well amended by the grace of God to-morn. My fair lords, said Sir Launcelot, wit you well, my careful body will into the earth, I have warning more then now I will say, therefore give me my rights. So when he was houseled and eneled, and had all that a christian man ought to have, he prayed the bishop  
10 that his fellows might bear his body to Joyous Gard. Some men say it was Anwick, and some men say it was Bamborow. Howbeit, said Sir Launcelot, me repenteth sore, but I made mine avow sometime that in Joyous Gard I would be buried, and because of breaking of mine avow, I pray you all lead me thither. Then there was weeping and wringing of hands among his fellows.

*Sir Launcelot dies.*

So at a season of the night they went all to their beds, for they all lay in one chamber. And so after midnight, against day, the bishop that was hermit, as he lay in his  
20 bed asleep, he fell upon a great laughter; and therewith all the fellowship awoke, and came unto the bishop, and asked him what he ailed. Alas, said the bishop, why did ye awake me, I was never in all my life so merry and so well at ease. Wherefore? said Sir Bors. Truly, said the bishop, here was Sir Launcelot with me, with more angels than ever I saw men upon one day; and I saw the angels heave Sir Launcelot unto heaven, and the gates of heaven opened against him. It is but the vexing of dreams, said Sir Bors, for I doubt not Sir Launcelot aileth nothing but  
30 good. It may well be, said the bishop, go ye to his bed, and then shall ye prove the sooth. So when Sir Bors and his fellows came to his bed they found him stark dead, and he lay as he had smiled, and the sweetest savour about him that ever they felt. Then was there weeping and wringing of hands, and the greatest dole they made that ever made men.

And on the morn the bishop did his mass of Requiem ; and after the bishop and all the nine knights put Sir Launcelot in the same horse bier that queen Guenever was laid in tofore that she was buried : and so the bishop and they altogether went with the corpse of Sir Launcelot daily, till they came to Joyous Gard, and ever they had an hundred torches burning about him ; and so within fifteen days they came to Joyous Gard. And there they laid his corpse in the body of the quire, and sang and read many psalters and prayers over him 10 and about him ; and ever his visage was laid open and naked, that all folk might behold him ; for such was the custom in those days, that all men of worship should so lie with open visage till that they were buried. And right thus as they were at their service, there came Sir Ector de Maris, that had seven year sought all England, Scotland, and Wales, seeking his brother Sir Launcelot.

*His body  
is taken  
to Joyous  
Gard.*

And when Sir Ector heard such noise and light in the quire of Joyous Gard, he alight and put his horse from 20 him, and came into the quire, and there he saw men sing and weep. And all they knew Sir Ector, but he knew not them. Then went Sir Bors unto Sir Ector, and told him how there lay his brother Sir Launcelot dead. And then Sir Ector threw his shield, sword, and helm from him ; and when he beheld Sir Launcelot's visage he fell down in a swoon. And when he awaked it were hard any tongue to tell the doleful complaints that he made for his brother. Ah, Launcelot, he said, thou were head of all christian knights ; and now I dare say, said Sir 30 Ector, thou Sir Launcelot, there thou liest, that thou were never matched of earthly knight's hand ; and thou were the courtiest knight that ever bare shield ; and thou were the truest friend to thy lover that ever bestrode horse ; and thou were the truest lover of a sinful man that ever loved woman ; and thou were the kindest man that ever

*The  
lament of  
Sir Ector.*

strake with sword; and thou were the goodliest person ever came among press of knights; and thou was the meekest man and the gentlest that ever ate in hall among ladies; and thou were the sternest knight to thy mortal foe that ever put spear in the rest.

Then there was weeping and dolour out of measure. Thus they kept Sir Launcelot's corpse on loft fifteen days, and then they buried it with great devotion. And then at leisure they went all with the bishop of Canterbury to  
10 his hermitage, and there they were together more than a month.

*The end.*

Then Sir Constantine, that was Sir Cadore's son, of Cornwall, was chosen king of England; and he was a full noble knight, and worshipfully he ruled this realm. And then this king Constantine sent for the bishop of Canterbury, for he heard say where he was; and so he was restored unto his bishopric, and left that hermitage; and Sir Bedivere was there ever still hermit to his life's end. Then Sir Bors de Ganis, Sir Ector de Maris, Sir  
20 Gahalantine, Sir Galihud, Sir Galihodin, Sir Blamor, Sir Bleoberis, Sir Williars le Valiant, Sir Clarrus of Clere-mont; all these knights drew them to their countries. Howbeit king Constantine would have had them with him, but they would not abide in this realm; and there they lived in their countries as holy men. And some English books make mention that they went never out of England after the death of Sir Launcelot, but that was but favour of makers. For the French book maketh mention, and is authorised, that Sir Bors, Sir Ector, Sir  
30 Blamor, and Sir Bleoberis, went into the holy land, there as Jesu Christ was quick and dead, and anon as they had stablished their lands; for the book saith so Sir Launcelot commanded them for to do, or ever he passed out of this world. And these four knights did many battles upon the miscreants or Turks. And there they died upon a Good Friday, for God's sake.

Here is the end of the whole book of king Arthur, and of his noble knights of the Round Table, that when they were whole together there was ever an hundred and forty. And here is the end of the Death of Arthur. I pray you all gentlemen and gentlewomen that read this book of Arthur and his knights from the beginning to the ending, pray for me while I am on live that God send me good deliverance, and when I am dead, I pray you all pray for my soul; for this book was ended the ninth year of the reign of king Edward the Fourth by Sir Thomas Maleore, 10 knight, as Jesu help him for his great might, as he is the servant of Jesu both day and night.

## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND BOOKS

USED OR REFERRED TO IN THE INTRODUCTION, NOTES  
AND GLOSSARY.

- O.S.* Malory's *Le Morte d'Arthur*, edited by Dr. Sommer.  
3 vols. 1889.
- M.* Malory's *Le Morte d'Arthur*. Sir Edward Strachey's  
Globe edition. 1891.
- M.H.B.* *Monumenta Historica Britannica*. 1848.
- Nutt.* *Studies on the Legend of the Holy Grail*, by Alfred  
Nutt. 1888.
- R. A. L.* *Studies in the Arthurian Legend* by Prof. Rhys.  
1891.
- Ten Brink.* *History of English Literature*, by Bernhard Ten  
Brink. Translated by Kennedy and Robinson.  
2 vols. 1893.
- 
- Abbott.* *Shakespearian Grammar*, by Dr. Abbott. 1874.
- Maetzner.* *English Grammar*, by Prof. Maetzner. Translated  
by Grece. 3 vols. 1874.
- Mason.* *English Grammar*, by C. B. Mason. 1881.
- 
- Cotgrave.* *French-English Dictionary*. 1650.
- Halliwell.* *Dictionary of Archaic and Provincial Words*. 1855.
- M. & S.* *Concise Dictionary of Middle English*, by Mayhew  
and Skeat. 1888. (And the Glossaries referred  
to in this book.)
- N.E.D.* *New English Dictionary* (in progress).
- 
- G.N.* Notes on Malory's Grammar, see pp. 189-203.
- 

The ordinary abbreviations are used for parts of speech and  
grammatical terms.

## NOTES ON MALORY'S GRAMMAR.

(These Notes are based on Dr. Abbott's *Shakespearian Grammar*, 1874. Malory's language is closer akin to Modern than to Middle English, and Dr. Abbott's book is an excellent Commentary on the English of the fifteenth as well as of the sixteenth century. For abbreviations and list of books referred to, see p. 188.)

I. Substantives.	VIII. Prefixes.
II. Verbs.	IX. Difficulties of Construction.
III. Adjectives.	(1) Ellipses.
IV. Pronouns.	(2) Redundancy.
V. Adverbs.	(3) Nominative Absolute.
VI. Prepositions.	(4) Noun Absolute.
VII. Conjunctions.	(5) Change of Construction.

### I. SUBSTANTIVES.

1. The singular is often used where we should use the plural; 'by no *mean*' (24. 14), 'a two *mile*' (49. 32), 'all *thing*' (87. 26), but 'justs' is treated as a singular word (11. 12).

2. One substantive is used to qualify another without any sign of the possessive case; 'horse shoulder' (77. 13), 'horse feet' (72. 20), 'great water bank' (25. 6), 'heart root' (126. 16). 'Horse' may possibly have dropped the 's' of the genitive owing to its ending, but this will not apply to the others, which merely happen to be unfamiliar instances of a tendency common enough to-day.

### II. VERBS.

#### INFLECTIONS, MOODS, TENSES, ETC.

##### 1. Old Forms of the Third Plural Present Indicative.

(a) In the Northern dialect, the ending was *-es*, and in the verb 'to be,' 'es' and 'wes' are constantly used for 'are' and 'were' (see Mason, p. 95). So we have, 'the sword and the scabbard *was* counterfeit' (29. 29), 'Here *is* I and my brother' (127. 5), 'then *was* there many knights' (149. 33). See also 44. 30, 84. 32, 183. 13, 187. 3.

(b) Of the Midland form in *-en*, we have instances in the following: 'all such books as *been* made' (2. 22), 'many causes



*causen me*' (151. 20). See also 4. 12, 133. 1, and notice that in the passage quoted the later form 'be' occurs in the next line (2. 23), a good instance of the transitional character of the language.

(c) Of the Southern form in *-eth*, the following is perhaps an example: 'and to good men *signyeth* other things than murder' (67. 7).

2. The Verb 'to be' has the Form 'be' for all Persons Singular and Plural of the Present Tense. 'We *be* not yet come thereto' (84. 9).

3. In the Second Person Singular Preterite Indicative of strong verbs the old inflection in *-e* occurs: 'thou *were* the courtiest knight' (185. 32).

#### 4. Preterite Indicative and Past Participle.

(a) In weak verbs *-ed* is omitted after 't' and 'd': 'while he is *gird* with this girdle' (81. 16), 'he *yield* him to a place of religion' (97. 9). So also 'alight' (18. 19), 'wend' (172. 33), 'start' (53. 4).

(b) In strong verbs the past participle originally ended in *-en*: 'When the knight felt him *stungen*' (169. 15). So also 'sitten' (24. 1), 'betaken' (13. 1), 'stricken' (34. 4), 'comen' (38. 2), 'riden' (105. 18), 'grounden' (135. 21), 'becomen' (170. 6), 'holpen' (171. 34), 'waxen' (183. 22). 'Yielden' (159. 13) is an example of a weak verb with this ending. 'Do' occurs in 1. 7 as the past participle of 'to do.'

(c) Of the preterite of strong verbs the following forms may be noted: 'drad' (37. 31), and 'halp' (84. 15), both weak verbs now; 'stack' (16. 28), 'brast' (31. 8), 'strake' (130. 26), 'thrang' (139. 7). In 'hight' (=was called), we have an instance of reduplication. 'Hight,' once *hæht*, is the preterite of the A.S. verb *hātan*, to be named, and the 'gh' is a variety of the initial guttural 'h' (see Mason, § 221): 'the one *hight* Tintagil' (7. 16); 'did' is another instance of reduplication which has survived.

#### 5. Subjunctive Mood.

(a) This is, in conditional sentences, sometimes indicated by placing the verb before the subject. 'Wist I it might please him' (23. 3), 'ne *had* your *tidings* been' (82. 24).

(b) An instance of the simple form of the mood occurs in 'for then *I rewarded* to your father ... full evil' (119. 25), i.e. 'I should have rewarded.' See Abbott, § 361.

(c) In the following it has the sense of the Imperative: 'He *have* shame that will leave you' (155. 18), (Abbott, § 364); 'woe *worth* this sword' (33. 1), (i.e. 'woe be to this sword'). See Gloss. s.v. *worth*.

#### 6. Infinitive Mood.

(a) When the E.E. ending in *en* was dropped and 'to' took its place, there was difference of use as to which verbs required the

'to.' So we have 'and charged them ... take a treaty' (168. 27), 'let (prevented) his own father to land' (164. 12), 'yet had I lever to fight' (27. 10).

(b) The preposition 'to' was originally used not with the infinitive but with the gerund in -e, and denoted a purpose. (See Abbott, § 356.) The following are probably instances of this use: 'feeble to go' (182. 5), 'the girdle was but poorly to come to' (81. 11). For the use of 'for' with this mood, see under Prepositions.

(c) The infinitive active is used in a passive sense. (Cf. 'What's to do' (see Abbott, § 359), and 'I have heard tell.') 'Sir Galahad heard in the leaves cry on high' (52. 25), 'for to nourish' (13. 1), 'wherefore I have not do made and imprint' (1. 7), 'he did do make letters' (161. 15). Cf. the Fr. *faire faire*.

### 7. Auxiliary Verbs.

(a) **Do.** The original sense is 'to cause,' 'to make,' and so it is naturally followed by an infinitive: 'as Sir Launcelot hath done us to understand' (43. 24), 'I do you to wit' (i.e. cause you to know) (92. 15), and the curious 'he did do make letters' (161. 15). See above, 6 (c). 'Do' is also used transitively as in 'do thankings' (55. 7), 'he did upon him a noble jesserance' (44. 20), and 'do off' (68. 26), and (87. 11).

(b) **Let.** This is found with three distinct meanings:

(i.) The modern sense of 'allow': 'Why will ye let me die' (74. 17).

(ii.) In the sense of 'to cause': 'the king let ordain' (23. 22), 'I shall let make a girdle' (82. 12). Cf. 33. 21, 158. 23.

(iii.) In the sense of 'to hinder': 'Why, will ye let me?' (73. 16). Cf. also 176. 7.

### 8. Voice.

The passive voice was often formed with the verb 'to be' as in our 'he is gone,' e.g. 'was betaken' (13. 1), 'were comen' (38. 2), 'was riden' (105. 18).

### 9. Reflexive Verbs.

Many verbs that are now intransitive were used as reflexive verbs; this appears to be due to a fondness for transitive verbs, e.g. 'I repent me' (137. 27), 'I complain me' (58. 29), 'all the knights marvelled them' (42. 36), 'I cast me' (119. 23), 'I shall not fear me to do' (162. 33). See Abbott, § 296.

10. **Impersonal Verbs** were much more common than they are now: 'me list' (18. 34), 'me liketh' (21. 16), 'us thinketh best' (134. 22), 'him thought' (18. 19), 'me seemeth' (27. 15), 'it happed him' (103. 23), are common instances.

In 'this shield behoveth to no man' (50. 17), i.e. belongs, and 'he might suffice' (= it might suffice him), (142. 20), we have verbs which are now impersonal used personally. In 'a spear wherewith he was smitten him' (82. 4), there seems to be a con-

fusion between a passive and impersonal construction (it was smitten him).

### 11. Transitive and Intransitive Verbs.

(1) 'Bereave' and 'endure' seem to be constructed with two objects. See 14. 29, 142. 8, 160. 19.

(2) The liking for transitive verbs has been already referred to in the paragraph on reflexive verbs. The following use of an intransitive as a transitive verb is probably an instance of the same tendency: 'All might not *prevail* Sir Mordred' (162. 20). Nouns and adjectives were also often turned into transitive verbs (see Abbott, § 290). 'It shall so *heavy* me at their departing' (47. 25). This is a curious illustration of the liking both for transitive and for reflexive verbs.

(3) In the following we may have adjectives used as verbs: 'She *feebled* so' (121. 15), 'there should no man *nigh* them' (159. 12). This is not an ellipsis of 'come,' as elsewhere Malory has 'he *nighed* it so nigh' (M. xiv. 3).

(4) Transitive verbs were used (but rarely) intransitively: 'and the head *left* still in his side' (108. 21), 'Griflet's spear all *to-shivered*' (16. 26), 'they *abashed* both one and other' (42. 3), (i.e. 'were abashed'), 'he *dashed* to the earth' (145. 17), 'then either *dressed* to other' (52. 28).

(5) Abbott (§ 294) notes in this connection a curious use of the passive voice, mostly found in participles, and quotes: 'He *childed* as I *fathered*' (*Lear*, III. vi. 117), i.e. 'being provided with children as I am provided with a father.' So in Malory we have 'I have been *well willed* unto my lord, King Arthur' (133. 14).

## III. ADJECTIVES.

1. Every, i.e. 'ever-ich,' 'ever-each,' is used in the following for 'each of two': 'and *every* knight gat a spear' (18. 10).

Very is used in the literal sense (Latin, *verus* true): 'Very knights (80. 4, 94. 29). Cf. 'Very God of very God.'

Much, more, most are used as the equivalents of 'great,' 'greater,' 'greatest' (*much* is the modern form of A.S. *micel*, great): '*much* man' (130. 24), *more* and *less* (44. 19), *most* man (34. 8). See also 60. 5, 81. 27, 163. 28.

2. Numeral Adjectives are used with the indefinite article: 'a forty horses' (37. 6), 'a two mile' (49. 32), 'a ten days' (121. 14), 'a fourscore' (133. 11). Cf. 'an eight days' (*St. Luke*, ix. 28), and our modern 'a dozen,' 'a score,' 'a fortnight.'

One occurs in the sense of 'above all' or 'alone' (see Abbott, § 18): 'the worthiest knight of the world *one*' (73. 14). See also 19. 26; cf. 'justissimus unus' (*Verg. Aen.* vii. 535) and *εἰς ὁλῶς* *ἀπῖος* (*Hom. Il.* xii. 243).

3. **Double Comparatives and Superlatives** are very common: 'more worthier' (39. 17), 'most brightest' (64. 12).

4. Of the **Inflexion of Adjectives** we have a trace in the word *alther*, the genitive plural of *all*. A.S. *eal-ra*. 'Our *alther* liege lord' (34. 9), (i.e. 'of us all'). Cf. Chaucer, *Cant. Tales*, *Prolog.*, 823.

#### IV. PRONOUNS.

##### 1. PERSONALS.

(a) In the second person *ye* is the nominative, *you* the accusative case. This distinction may be observed in the Bible ("I will let *you* go, and *ye* shall stay no longer," *Ex.* ix. 28). It is almost invariably observed in Malory, e.g. "*ye* must purvey *you*" (8. 24).

(b) *Thou* is used much as the German *du*. It is used (Abbott, § 231):—

(1) By superiors to inferiors, e.g. by Arthur to Griflet (15. 22), by Merlin to Pellinore (19. 10), and even to Arthur (17. 18); by the 'religious man' to Bors (68. 18); by the hermit to Lionel (72. 30).

(2) By relatives to each other. Lionel uses it to his younger brother (71. 33).

(3) In contempt or anger to strangers: '*Thou* art in my danger' says Sir Pellinore to the unknown and conquered Arthur (18. 33). But the use of *thou* is obviously disappearing, for the same speaker uses both '*thou*' and '*ye*' even in the same sentence (see 16. 3, 4, 6, 7). The 'fair gentlewoman' appealing to Sir Bors for help in God's name addresses him as '*thou*,' and then lapses into the formal '*ye*' (69. 25, 26).

(c) In the third person *him* and *his* are used as the accusative and genitive cases of *it*, cf. 'If the salt has lost *his* savour' (*St. Luke*, xiv. 34), 'there was in *him* all manner of colours' (80. 16), i.e. 'in the pommel,' 'summer with *his* fresh flowers' (125. 4).

(d) *Me* and *him*, *us* and *them* are always used as datives with impersonal verbs (see *supra*, II. 10), and often with other verbs as in 'to deliver *me* his sword' (12. 14), 'say *me*' (58. 35).

##### 2. REFLEXIVE PRONOUNS.

Forms with *-self* occur but seldom, their place being taken by the personals; e.g. 'he enforced *him* mickle to undo the door' (90. 32).

Of the uninflected *self* (see Mason, § 177), we have an instance in 'the doors shut by *themselves*' (42. 2). Maetzner, I. 300.

## RELATIVE PRONOUNS.

(a) **That** was originally the only relative (Abbott, § 258), so we have 'Jesus *that* was born on that night' (10. 14); see also 153. 10.

**That** is also used as a conjunctive affix (see Abbott, §§ 287 and 288), 'I marvel what knight *that* he is' (109. 22). So we have 'after *that*' (1. 1), 'wherefore *that*' (1. 6), 'where *that*' (93. 5), 'till *that*' (94. 12), 'but *that*' (74. 12).

(b) **which** was used instead of *who* (cf. the Lord's Prayer); 'and she, *which* was nothing assured' (69. 18).

(c) **the which** occurs as the equivalent both of *who* and *which* (*which* being treated as an indefinite adjective, Abbott, § 270): 'the *which* rideth before me' (55. 16), 'the *which* told him' (88. 4), i.e. 'the which knight,' 'the which writ.' In 63. 20 it is used for the first person.

(d) In the following both **which** and **the which** have the sense of 'as to which' (see Abbott, § 272): '*which* we and this castle is hers' (84. 31), 'the *which* he felt in himself to have died without confessing' (72. 22). See also 63. 21 and the note on that passage.

(e) **what ... what** are used like the Latin *qua, qua*, for 'partly .. partly': '*What* by water and *what* by land' (23. 12). The use of *what* in the phrase '*What* of Northgalis and of Cornwall' (133. 10) appears to be analogous to this.

(f) In the following we have an instance of the relative with a **supplementary pronoun** (cf. the German *der du*, Abbott, §§ 248 and 249): '*that thou* were never matched' (185. 31); cf. 27. 32. Cf. also 'the adventure of the Sancgreal, *which* ye and many others have undertaken the quest of *it*' (67. 3).

(g) **who that** and **which that** also occur: 'and *who that* were not dead all out there they slew them' (171. 17); cf. 60. 35; 'the powers *which that* God had set there' (98. 29).

(h) **as** is used as a relative in the following: 'and *as in that*, said Sir Gawaine, he hath done but knightly' (140. 18); *as in that* equals *quod ad hoc (attinet)* (Mason, § 165); 'will give him no part of his livelihood but *as* Sir Ontzlake keepeth' (26. 16). See also 25. 29.

(i) **Omission of Relative.** This may in part have been suggested by the identity of the demonstrative *that* and the relative *that* (Abbott, § 244. Cf. 'we speak *that* we do know' (St. John, III. 11)), 'ye shall achieve *that* never knights might bring to an end' (43. 27), 'in the first place (*in which*) ye will require me' (55. 14). See also 45. 24, 95. 32, 110. 11, 127. 4.

## 4. DISTRIBUTIVE PRONOUNS.

**Either** is used where we should now use *each*: 'and *either* gave other a ring' (131. 33). See also 64. 26, 169. 26.

**every each** (i.e. *ever-ich* = *ever each*) is used for 'each': 'that they should depart *every each* from other' (48. 25). See also 51. 1, 64. 27. In Caxton it is 'everych,' but the Globe edition has wrongly modernized the spelling.

## V. ADVERBS.

1. (a) In E.E. the dative case of adjectives ending in *e* was used as an adverb, e.g. *bright*, adj.; *brighte*, adv. In time the *e* was dropped but the adverbial use remained (Abbott, § 1). So we have *near* for 'nearly' (36. 4), *sore* for 'sorely' (110. 2), *hard* for 'hardly' (50. 20). So *harder* = 'more hardly' (143. 26).

(b) Of adverbs formed from the genitive case of nouns we have an example in *needs* (16. 23), and probably in the following: 'or it be forth *days*' (132. 32), i.e. 'far advanced in the day' (cf. *now-a-days*, Abbott, § 25).

2. **Negatives.** (a) The old English negative was *ne* before the verb and *not* after it when the verb was finite (see Mason, § 272); thus we have '*ne* let me *not* be shamed' (63. 19); and *nist not* (69. 31).

(b) But *ne* is often used alone: 'that thou *ne* go that way' (51. 23).

(c) And often has the sense of 'nor': 'neither slain *ne* shamed' (145. 31), 'neither king, duke, *ne* earl, baron, *ne* knight, lady *nor* gentlewoman' (154. 15).

(d) *ne* is joined to 'is': 'for there *nis* no band' (132. 22); cf. 133. 24; to 'wist,' as 'he *nist* not what to do' (69. 31), and to 'would,' as 'whether they would or *nold*' (85. 14).

(e) The **double negative** is extremely common and instances may be found in nearly every chapter: e.g. *never . none* (43. 4), *never . no* (21. 19), *never . . nothing* (62. 9). But in 'I early *nor* late proffered her bounty *nor* fair behests' (120. 26) the 'nor' seems in each case equivalent to 'and.'

3. **all** is used adverbially in sense of 'completely' in 'all to shivered' (16. 26); and so in 28. 4 'all where' may mean 'everywhere,' or 'completely where.'

**also** occurs in its literal sense of 'just as' or 'even so' (see 'as' under conjunctions): 'four and twenty days and *also* many nights' (92. 20).

**like** is an adverb in '*like* as ye had promised her' (28. 14), i.e. 'in the same way as.'

**not for that** is used in quite a literal sense: '*not for that* he restrained him of his evil will' (73. 3), i.e. 'he did not on that account restrain him.' This may explain the more difficult **not for then** which has the sense of 'nevertheless.' '*Not for then* the hall was not greatly darkened' (42. 2). Cf. 45. 11, 56. 32.

**sith** and **sithen** are used as adverbs meaning 'since': 'and never *sith* might he be healed' (82. 5). Cf. 143. 9. See also under Conjunctions.

**so .. as**, where we use 'as' occurs, as in '*So full of life as the mightiest of you*' (92. 16). This is still quite common in Somersetshire.

## VI. PREPOSITIONS.

1. The following are instances of prepositions used in a sense which has now become obsolete.

**at**, in the sense of 'at the hands of.' Cf. Scotch '*speir at*.' 'They took their leave *at* Sir Bernard' (105. 21). It is used for 'with' in '*armed at all pieces*' (158. 6), and for 'by' in '*at the reverence of Jesu Christ*' (50. 14), for 'on' in '*at the board*' (59. 18).

**by** originally meant 'near' and hence 'about' or 'concerning': 'We will never say evil *by* that man' (126. 32).

**for to**, with infinitive, the original notion of 'destination' or 'purpose' having been lost. This was originally a strengthening of the infinitive with 'to,' see *supra*, II. 6 (b), after it had been weakened and treated as a pure infinitive. (See Maetzner, III. 53; Abbott, § 152.) 'Thought it no wisdom *for to* abide' (77. 15); cf. 10. 16.

**for**, meaning 'because of,' is found governing not only a noun but also a clause: the desire for clearness or emphasis led to the addition of 'because' (Abbott, § 151). 'And *for because* I have slain these knights' (133. 25). See also 27. 1.

**into = unto**: '*despoiled into her smock*' (138. 27).

**long upon**, a variety of 'long on' meaning on 'account of' (A.S. *gelang*, owing to; cf. our colloquial 'all along of you'): 'all this was *long upon* two unhappy knights' (125. 9).

**of**, originally meaning 'off' or 'from,' as in '*sith ye be come of kings and queens*' (51. 7).

(a) Applied to time means 'from': '*of a great while*' (66. 13); cf. 103. 6.

(b) Implying consequence: '*we should be dead of that sin*' (74. 32).

(c) Implying agent or instrument: 'he was made knight *of* the best man that was there' (14. 21), 'all they were alighted *of* the grace of God' (45. 8); cf. 79. 8. Cf. '*prayed him of fellowship*'

(97. 30), 'the priest was so greatly charged *of* the figure' (91. 25); cf. 74. 12, 181. 32.

(d) In the sense of 'as regards': 'worth of prowess *of* your deeds' (34. 22); cf. 27. 23, 48. 22, 111. 15, 115. 6.

(e) In the sense of 'concerning' or 'about': 'I complain me *of* you' (58. 29). See Abbott, §§ 165-179.

(f) In the sense of 'for': 'God thank your largeness *of* your goodness' (35. 5), '*of* mercy' (124. 23).

(g) In the sense of 'to': 'what adventures befall *of* errant knights' (34. 14).

(h) '*of* heart' = bold (59. 27) and '*of* right' = rightly (179. 33). The latter may be compared with the formation of adverbs from the genitive of nouns.

**on**, representing juxtaposition of any kind. Another form was 'an,' which survives in the modern 'asleep,' 'alive,' but Malory uses '*on* sleep' (19. 23), '*on* back' (107. 3), '*on* live' (19. 22), '*on* side' (147. 7), '*on* loud' (116. 10). He also writes 'think *on* joy' (80. 27), 'biting *on* his throat' (25. 6).

or means 'before,' as in '*or* day' (10. 25), '*or* night' (42. 6), '*or* now' (115. 34). See Conjunctions.

**till** and **untill**, meaning 'to' (see Mason, § 281): '*till* his daughter' (114. 18), '*till* a bay' (159. 1), '*until* an hermit' (19. 34), 'cried on loud *until* him' (116. 10).

**to**, (a) In the sense of 'as': 'I send her him *to* a present' (35. 34).

(b) In the sense of 'on': 'laid him down *to* the ship's board' (87. 29).

(c) 'He is not worshipped *to* his right' (96. 24), i.e. 'rightfully,' may perhaps be compared with (a).

**tofore** is used for 'before' both as preposition and adverb: '*tofore* the incarnation of our Lord' (1. 21).

**to-ward**, i.e. *to* and the adjective *weard* (= Lat. *vergens*). See Mason, § 281. Malory sometimes separates these two words, as in '*to* the *justward*' (11. 24), '*to* the *deathward*' (17. 19), '*to* the world-*ward*' (97. 8). Cf. *to* *scipan-weard* = towards the ship (Sax. Chr. A.D. 1009), and 'thy thoughts which are *to us-ward*,' Ps. xl. 5; quoted by Maetznar, II. 305, 306.

**with** has the sense of 'by' in 'full straitly bestad *with* a false traitor' (165. 36). Cf. 13. 24, 35. 8, 63. 35.

## 2. Prepositions are omitted—

(a) In adverbial expressions of time and manner (Abbott, § 202): 'then came he *to* the door (*at*) a great pace' (91. 27).

(b) In the following: 'many a grim word was spoken (*by*) either *to* other' (169. 25), 'that manner (*of*) clothing' (181. 7), 'hard (*for*) any tongue *to* tell' (185. 27), '(*for*) that I have misdane .. have mercy' (74. 21).



## VII. CONJUNCTIONS.

1. (a) **An** or **and** are constantly used apparently with the sense of 'if.' The hypothesis, the *if*, is really expressed not by the *and*, but by the subjunctive, *and* merely meaning 'with the addition of,' 'plus,' just as *but* means 'leaving out,' or 'minus' (Abbott, § 102, and cf. Mason, § 287). (For the hypothesis expressed by a simple subjunctive, see *supra*, II. 5 (a).) '*An I would*' (17. 18), '*And God be not thy friend*' (17. 19).

(b) **And**, in answers, may have the sense of 'you are right,' or 'yes and.' Cf. γάρ (Abbott, § 97). "'Sir," said the bishop, "*and wit you well*"' (162. 32).

(c) **And**, in the following, appears to have the E.E. sense of 'also' (Abbott, § 100), or rather to be a repetition of 'also': 'also where ye noise where my lord Arthur is slain, *and* that is not so' (162. 35). But see the note on this passage. For the 'where,' see *infra*.

(d) In the following, 'and' seems to have the force of 'that' (consecutive), 'he was so hardy *and* he leapt upon him' (56. 32).

2. **As**, a contraction of the E.E. *also*, *alse*, *als*, A.S. *calswa*, is a strengthened form of 'so,' i.e. 'all so,' 'just so,' or 'just as.' (Abbott, § 106, Mason, § 264.)

(a) It has the sense of 'just as' in '*as he* which had tasted none other meat' (66. 13); (cf. 69. 11), i.e. 'just as a man.' '*As* ever I may do for you' (55. 13). In 60. 24 '*as*' = 'as if.'

(b) It appears to mean 'when' in 'till our Lady Day Assumption, *as* the great feast should be' (105. 29), '*anon as* they had established their lands' (186. 31).

(c) It is used for 'since': 'I wot well *as* is Sir Agravaine, Sir Gawaine's brother' (133. 26). See *infra*, IX. 5 (d).

(d) It is used **redundantly with definitions of time**, and is said by Halliwell in this sense to be an Eastern Counties phrase (Abbott, § 114), '*as* at this time' (39. 31), '*as* to-morn' (131. 4), '*as* that night' (157. 35). Cf. 'God, who *as* at this time' (Collect for Whitsunday).

(e) 'So' (*swa*) was used to **convert an interrogative or demonstrative into a relative**; and *as* was used in a similar way: '*there as* Jesu Christ was quick and dead' (186. 30); *there as* = 'where.' Cf. also 50. 36. In 143. 12 it = 'where as.'

(f) Akin to this is its use as a mere **conjunctive affix** (Abbott, § 289). (Cf. the use of *that*, IV. 3 (a).) '*Thus as* Ector and Gawaine rode more than an eight days' (65. 11).

(g) In **relational construction** *as* may be omitted after *so*: 'nor never none be so hardy (*as*) to do away this girdle' (81. 17). Cf. 41. 30.

3. **Both** is used as a conjunction meaning 'also,' following instead of preceding the two words connected by 'and': 'when the maid was horsed and he *both*' (78. 29). See *N.E.D.*

4. **But** (A.S. *be* or *bi*, and *utan*) was originally a preposition, and meant 'on the outside of,' and then 'without,' 'except.' Its uses as a conjunction may all be explained by this meaning. Thus we have:

(a) **but**, followed by a clause beginning with '*that*' (cf. *supra*, iv. 3 (a)): '*but that ye shall die*' (74. 12).

(b) **Or** by a clause beginning with '*if*': '*but if the bearer be mischieved*' (50. 15). Cf. 72. 34, 79. 17.

(c) Sometimes we have both '*that*' and '*if*': '*but that if he be mischieved*' (49. 9).

(d) Sometimes the **that** is omitted: 'and *but* thou yield thee' (18. 34), 'there sat never none *but* he, *but* he were mischieved' (43. 5). The *but* he may be explained as an ellipsis of the verb ('*but he sat*'). Cf. 13. 15.

(e) **but** is sometimes apparently an adverb meaning 'only': thus (1) *but* introduces an exception to a general negative statement; (2) this negative is omitted. 'Ther *nis but* a god' (i.e. 'there is not but one god'), becomes 'there is but one god' (Mason, § 293 and note; Abbott, § 128). So in Malory 'he abode *but* death': (74. 5). See also 79. 8 and 81. 11.

5. **For** is used for 'because': '*but for* I promised' (32. 23).

6. **Or** is used for 'before' (see Prepositions). It is the same as the modern 'ere,' A.S. *aer*: '*or it be day*' (17. 4), '*or ever we depart*' (32. 13). '*Or ever* is an emphatic form like 'whenever' (Abbott, § 131), '*or that ye have some adventure*' (40. 23). For the *that*, see iv. 3 (a). In the following, 'Lionel was born *or* he' (72. 11), we must understand the verb again, '*or he was born.*'

7. **Save** (Fr. *sauf*), meaning 'except,' 'unless,' is said by Abbott (§ 118) to be probably a participle (saved) used with an absolute case, as in '*save your good grace*' (41. 15). In the same way it would be used with a clause. (Cf. the use of 'but.') So we have '*save there was another ship*' (79. 21).

8. **Sin, sith, sithen**, afterwards, since (A.S. *sith*, *sð*. time; *sithen*, adverb or conjunction): 'it is of late come *sin* ye were wise' (103. 7), '*sith* thou hast conjured me so' (50. 16); here *sith* is causal, as is *sithen* in (51. 10). *Sith that* is also used (67. 9). Cf. *but that, or that*. See also under Adverbs.

9. **That** frequently has a consecutive force, the preceding 'so' being omitted: 'Brake the spear *that* the truncheon stack in his body' (16. 28). See also 64. 26, 66. 34, 74. 5, 105. 27, 175. 34. For the omission of '*that*,' see ix. 1 (f). For *that* as conjunctive affix, see iv. 3 (a).

10. **Then** is the original form of *than*, 'it belongeth no more to me *then* it doth to you' (83. 1). (See Mason, § 294.)

11. **There of** is used for the modern 'therefore' in '*there of* I pray you do off all your clothes' (68. 25).

12. **There as, thus as.** See under 'as,' (e), (f).

13. **Where** is used metaphorically as we now use 'whereas' (Abbott, § 134). 'Also *where* ye noise where ... Arthur is slain' (162. 34). See *supra*, under *and*.

14. **Where through** is used for 'where by' (50. 28).

15. **Whether** is used in the sense of 'if' ('A question is one way of putting a hypothesis,' Mason, 291): 'My lord shall have his queen and thee, and slay you both *whether* it please him' (143. 23).

## VIII. PREFIXES.

**be-** has a kind of intensive force as in 'be bled' (30. 11), 'besweat' (38. 6).

**for-** had originally the sense of destruction, or loss, as in *for-think*, 'to repent' (46. 12). Often it has only an intensive force as in *for-bled* (136. 2).

**to-**, meaning 'asunder,' 'in two,' 'that near her heart *to-burst*' (36. 5). So also we have *all to-*, *i.e.* 'completely in two': 'the place should *all to-drive*' (45. 6), and '*all to-shivered*' (16. 26, 17. 33). Cf. 'and all to brake his scull' (*Judges*, ix. 53).

## IX. DIFFICULTIES OF CONSTRUCTION.

### 1. ELLIPSES.

(a) Of the **subject**, where it is easily supplied from the context (Abbott, § 399). 'I complain me of you that ye have done unto me and (*I*) have not offended unto you' (58. 30); 'They came unto a castle in a valley, (*which*) was closed with a running water' (78. 21); 'Sir,' said she, 'leave your horse here and I shall leave mine; and (*they*) took their saddles' (78. 36).

(b) Of **it**, 'and at the twenty-fifth day (*it*) befell him that he opened his eyes' (92. 21); cf. 95. 7.

(c) Of **infinitive**, 'and suffered me (*to be*) in peril of death' (71. 24); cf. 143. 5. 'I will (*go*) into the Vale of Avilion' (173. 33).

(d) Of **relative pronouns**. See iv. 3 (i).

(e) Of **prepositions**. See vi. 2.

(f) Of **that** in consecutive sense: 'he did so much (*that*) he rose' (74. 13).

(g) In **conjunctive sentences**. 'The Elizabethans seem to have especially disliked the repetition which is now considered necessary in the latter of two clauses connected by a relative or a conjunction' (Abbott, § 383). The following are instances of the same tendency: 'Sir Gawaine was borne into one of King

Arthur's pavilions, and leeches were brought to him, *and (he was) searched and salved with soft ointments*' (160. 30); 'have me not in despite for my sins done aforetime *and (I pray)* that thou show me something' (91. 4), 'ye are the man ... that I am most beholding to and my good lady and mother your wife' (*is the woman*, etc.) (13. 7). In much the same way 'I pray' is understood in (55. 15), and 'I would answer' in (88. 7). See also 43. 3, 77. 31.

## 2. REDUNDANCY.

(a) A **redundant pronoun** is inserted when the noun is separated from its verb by an intervening clause. (Cf. Abbott, §§ 242, 243.) 'The *bishop* that was hermit, as he *lay* in his bed asleep, *he* fell upon a great laughter' (184. 20).

(b) In the same way we have a **redundant relative**: 'for the noble King Arthur's sake *that*, I suppose, *that* made thee knight' (69. 27).

(c) We have also the **conjunction that** repeated: 'the horse is such a man's horse, *that*, and I lent it you or any other man *that* he would slay me' (55. 19). 'Galahad fell in his prayer long time *that*, at what time he asked, *that* he should pass out of this world' (97. 25).

(d) In the following we have both the **redundant conjunction** and the **redundant pronoun**, and the repetition of the words 'shew some miracle' are in a similar way due to the intervention of the clause 'as ... mankind': 'for this cause—*that Jesus*, that was born on that night, *that He* would of his great mercy shew some miracle, as He was come to be king of mankind, for to *shew some miracle* who should be rightwise king of this realm' (10. 14). For the change in the mood of 'shew,' see *infra*, 5 (b). So also 'would never for fair speech nor for foul, *would never* trust to come in his hands again' (162. 21), and possibly 'Forever unto all unhappiness, brother Sir Mordred, *thereto* will ye grant' (126. 5).

(e) Under the head of redundancy we may also include the use of synonymous expressions, such as '*know and wit*' (113. 2), '*furnished and garnished*' (7. 15), '*was ware and saw*' (59. 15). See also the section on Noun Absolute.

## 3. NOMINATIVE ABSOLUTE.

This is used with a participle (Abbott, § 376). The following are instances of this construction: 'and ever Sir Lionel went about the horse-bier.. and *frankincense* upon the corpse *incensed*' (182. 25), (N.B. 'incensed' might conceivably be finite, governing 'frankincense'); 'for there is no tongue can tell the joy that they made either of other, and many a friendly *word spoken* between' (88. 28); 'Four hundred *winters* and fifty four *accomplished* after the passion of our Lord ought this siege to be fulfilled' (40. 6).

## 4. NOUN ABSOLUTE.

'Sometimes a noun occurs in a prominent position at the beginning of a sentence to express the subject of the thought without the usual grammatical connection with a verb or preposition' (Abbott, § 417). 'The *Adventure of the Sancgreal*, which ye and many other have undertaken the quest of it, and find it not, the cause is, for it appeareth not to sinners' (67. 3). Cf. 8. 30. 'For the *body of him* which I ought to hang by, he shall not be shamed in no place' (81. 15). Cf. with this the section on Redundancy.

## 5. CHANGE OF CONSTRUCTION.

(a) 'Change from Indirect to Direct Speech in the same sentence is very common, and, as in Greek, it generally adds vividness to the sentence; 'and bade him be ready...for within forty days he would fetch him out of the biggest castle that he *hath*' (7. 14), 'the king commanded two knights and two ladies to take the child...and that *ye* deliver him' (9. 4). For other instances see 15. 13, 69. 25, 78. 10, 116. 25, 118. 26, 168. 28.

(b) In the following we have an infinitive substituted for a finite verb: 'And yet I trust, through God's grace, *that* after my death *to have* a sight of the blessed face of Christ' (178. 36), 'that he might live and *to be* whole' (77. 32), "'Ah, fair friend," said Sir Percivale, "as ever I may do for you, and *to be* your true knight"' (55. 13), 'I might have met you and there *to have made*,' etc. (158. 29). This also explains 'to shew' in 10. 14. (See under Redundancy, ix. 2 (a).)

Abbott (§ 416) ascribes the change to the desire for clearness, but it rather appears to be due to the fact that two constructions are possible, and the writer has inadvertently used them both, as in the example quoted by Abbott:

'Keep your word, Phoebe, that you'll marry me,  
Or else, refusing me, to wed this shepherd.'

A. Y. L. v. iv. 21.

(c) We possibly have a confusion between two constructions in, 'take a treaty for a *month day*' (168. 13), which might have been either 'for a month from to-day,' or 'for this day month.'

Abbott (§ 411) quotes 'I saw not better sport these *seven years day*' (2 *Hen. VI.* ii. i. 3).

In 'for the love of the departure of those knights' (46. 33), we have a confusion between the love of the knights, and regret at their departure.

In 'I could not well *deny* but that there was such a king' (3. 26), there is a confusion between 'deny' and 'assert.'

(d) In the following the construction appears to be changed owing to a change of thought (Abbott, § 415):

(i.) 'Who would have wend that thou that hast been to me so lief and dear, and thou art named a noble knight, and would betray me for the riches of the sword' (172. 33). The primary thought is 'who would have thought that thou wouldst betray me,' and the secondary, 'thou art so lief and dear, and a noble knight, and yet would betray me.'

(ii.) 'And for because I have slain this night three knights, I wot well as is Sir Agravaine Sir Gawaine's brother, and at the least twelve of his fellows, for this cause now I am sure of mortal war' (133. 25). This seems to contain the two thoughts, (1) 'because I have slain Sir Gawaine's brother and twelve of his fellows,' (2) 'since (as) Sir Agravaine is Sir Gawaine's brother, and twelve of the knights are his fellows.'

In 'for it ought not to be done away, but by the hands of a maid, *and that she be* a king's daughter' (81. 18), the 'ought' has become in the writer's mind, 'it is necessary.' We have a similar change in 'that we let purvey ten knights, *and they* to keep this sword' (11. 8).

## NOTES.

*N.B.*—The grammatical difficulties and peculiarities of the text are explained and discussed in the Grammatical Notes, p. 189. For convenience of reference all words of which the use is discussed in the Grammatical Notes are indexed in the Glossary.

**William Caxton** (or Causton) was born "in Kent in the Weeld." He was apprenticed in 1438 to Robert Large, a mercer of London, who died in 1441. Soon after his death Caxton went to Bruges and he stayed in the Low Countries for thirty years. He probably learned printing at Cologne and printed his first book with the help of Colard Mansion at Bruges. He came to England in 1476 and set up his press at Westminster in the following year. He knew French thoroughly, and probably Latin, and translated many of the books which he printed. He has thus done something to fix the literary language of the sixteenth century. No less than 102 different works or editions were printed by him. Of these the first was the *Recuyell of the Histories of Troy*, probably printed at Bruges in 1474. Among the "divers histories" may be included also the *History of Jason* (1477?), *Chronicles of England* (1480), and the *Polychronicon* (see note on 2. 31). Among books of "ensample and doctrine" mention should be made of the *Dictes and Sayings of the Philosophers* (1477), the first book printed in England; the *Book of Courtesy* (1479), *Boethius de Consolatione Philosophiae* (1479), and the *Pilgrimage of the Soul* (1483), a translation from the French ascribed to Lydgate. The *Morte d'Arthur* was printed in 1485. The types used by Caxton were movable and were an imitation of contemporary handwriting. A facsimile of a page of the *Morte d'Arthur* may be seen in Sommer's edition. None of Caxton's books have a title page. (*Dict. of Nat. Biog.*)

1. 7. **do made and imprint.** For 'do' see G.N. II. 4 (b). This seems to be a confusion between "I have not caused (to) make and imprint," see G.N. II. 6 (c), and "I have not caused to be made and imprinted."

17. **ballad and in prose**, e.g. Chaucer's *Troilus* and Lydgate's *Troy Book*, a manipulation of Guido's *Historia Trojana*. On the popularity in England of Chaucer's tale the reader should consult Ten Brink, II. 224.

22. **duke**. In Roman times the greatest officials were styled 'comes' and 'dux.' (See Introduction, p. xiii.) *Dux* was the title assumed by the rulers of Normandy. It was not an English title till the reign of Edward III. The old chroniclers delighted to give the titles of their day to the heroes of the Old Testament, and the heralds even went so far as to give them coats of arms. Cf. also *Genesis*, xxxvi. 15.

24. **Judas Machabeus**. He defeated Nicanor and the Syrians in 165 B.C. in a battle which went far to re-establish the independence of the Jews. The Book of Maccabees is in the *Apocrypha*.

2. **stalled**, i.e. as it were solemnly inducted into their stalls. So the Knights of the Garter have each their stall in St. George's Chapel, Windsor.

6. **Charlemain**. Caxton himself translated from the French and printed a *Life of Charles the Great*, December, 1485, only four months after the issue of Malory.

8. **Godfrey of Boloine**. He was the leader of the first crusade and refused the title of King of Jerusalem, though he had defeated the Saracens and was in actual possession of the Holy Land. He died in 1100 A.D. Caxton translated his life and printed it in 1481.

30. **Glastonbury**. This church, situated on slightly rising ground in the midst of the marshes of Somerset, is undoubtedly one of the oldest Christian foundations in England. Popular tradition, either based on or expressed in the Chronicle of William of Malmesbury (d. 1143), ascribes its origin to St. Joseph of Arimathea, who is said to have come over to England and converted the natives in A.D. 63. He is also said to have planted there his staff which, miraculously budding, became the Holy Thorn of Glastonbury. The churches of the West of England in many cases escaped the destruction which they suffered in other parts from the inroads of the Saxons, for the Saxons were not masters of this part of the country till some sixty years after Christianity had been re-introduced into Kent by St. Augustine, and Cenwealh, the conqueror of this part of Somerset, was himself a Christian. Glastonbury may therefore boast of an unbroken Christian tradition. The oldest portion of the existing church is Joseph's Chapel (late Norman), which is believed to occupy the site of the earliest British church of wattle and daub. Glastonbury was early identified with Avalon or the Island of the Blest. Giraldus says Avalon is derived either from *aval*, British for apple, because the place abounded in orchards, or



else a *Vallone quodam*, a former ruler of that part. He says also the old name was *Inis Gutrin*, i.e. Glass Island, which he connects with Glastonbury. Glastonbury may be the "borough of the Sons of Glaest," or may be referred to a Celtic source, but the fable of the "Glass Island" was probably older than and not suggested by the name. It is the glass island of Chrestien, the land of perpetual summer, ruled over by Melwas, who was lord of the realms of the dead. Rhys rejects the connection between Avalon and apples, and adopts the derivation from the name of a king called in Latin Avallo, and in Welsh Avallach, or Avalloc. This king is to be regarded as a Celtic divinity of darkness and death, who appears in the Grail legends in the form of the Saracen Evelake or Evalach. Glastonbury is also connected in fable with Gwyn ab Nudh, another form of the Celtic Dis, and was thus from early time identified with the abode of the dead (R. A. L. c. xiv.). Nutt suggests that the early Christian church took the place of some Celtic temple or spot dedicated to the Lord of the Shades, and this hypothesis would go far to explain the introduction of Glastonbury into the Grail legend (see Appendix, p. 237).

The story of the sepulchre of Arthur being found there is taken from Giraldus Cambrensis (born 1147 at Manorbeer), who tells us that the monks found it in 1187, with the inscription, *Hic jacet sepultus inclytus rex Arthurius, in insula Avallonia, cum Wennevereia uxore sua secunda*. The yellow hair, he says, was still adhering to the skull of Guinevere, which fell to pieces on being taken up by an over eager monk. The coffin was a hollow oak tree buried fifteen feet deep and the inscription was written on the under side of a leaden cross, which was itself affixed to the under side of a wide stone found in the excavations. This Giraldus himself examined, and the grave, he says, was thus concealed that it might be saved from violation by the Saxons and again identified when those troublous times had ceased (*Speculum Ecclesiae*, II. 8-10). This story must be received with reservation.

31. **Policronicon.** This work (printed by Caxton in 1482) was written by Ralph Higden, a monk of St. Werburgh's, Chester, who died in 1363. It was a history of 'many periods or ages' (hence its name). It was translated from the Latin in 1387 by John Trevisa, vicar of Berkeley, in Gloucestershire, who is also said to be the first translator of the Bible, though no remains of this translation exist, except perhaps some verses painted on the beams of the chapel in Berkeley Castle. Higden, in Bk. v. c. vi., repeats and expands the account of Nennius, Geoffrey, William of Malmesbury, and Giraldus, and discusses the credibility of the story, which he accepts in part, but "I holde more (wondre) why Gaufridus preyseth more so moche oon that al the olde famous and sooth writers of stories maketh of wel

nygh non menciouñ" (Trevisa's Translation, "Rolls Series," Vol. v. 337).

34. **Bochas.** Boccaccio's work, *De Casibus Virorum Illustrium*, was turned into verse by John Lydgate under the title, "The Tragedies gathered by Jhon Bochas of all such princes as fell from theyr estates through the mutability of fortune since the creation of Adam until his time." This version was begun 1424-25. This again is not an independent authority, the matter being taken from Geoffrey of Monmouth.

36. **Galfridus, i.e. Geoffrey, Archdeacon of Monmouth.** See Introduction, pp. xvi, xvii.

3. 4. **St. Edward's shrine, i.e. the shrine of Edward the Confessor.**

5. **seal.** It would be interesting to know what this seal was which Caxton appears to have seen himself. The inscription looks as if it had been taken from a Roman coin, and the word *patricius* occurs on coins of the Roman colony founded at Corduba, in Spain, which took the name of Colonia Patucia. It was used after Constantine's time for a man of high rank, but is unknown in Romano-British inscriptions, nor does it appear, as far as I know, on any of the works containing the titles of Roman officials in Britain. Most probably, if there was such a seal, it was a monkish forgery.

7. Part of Dover Castle—the Pharos—is undoubtedly of Roman work. But the scull and mantle and sword remind one of the rapier shown in Berkeley Castle as the instrument with which Edward II. was done to death, this rapier being obviously of a much later period than the fourteenth century. (See also p. 166. 20, and note.)

8. **Cradok's mantle.** I do not know what this is. Cradok would seem to equal Carados (see Index to Proper Names), in whose name there may be a reminiscence of the Silurian chief Caratacus.

**Round Table.** The table now shown at Winchester is of much later date. See note on 23. 5.

17. The Arthurian legends were certainly widely diffused, and readers of *Don Quixote* will remember how that valiant knight refers to the deeds of King Arthur, when he is explaining to Vivaldo and his incredulous friends what is meant by being a 'knight-errant.'

19. **Camelot.** Caxton is wrong in placing Camelot in Wales. Malory himself identifies it with Winchester (see 102. 9); but if identification is possible, it is most probable that the city occupied the space within the famous triple earthworks of South Cadbury, in Somerset. Here is a little river Camel; the traditions rife among the natives, that King Arthur and his knights sleep under

the mighty ramparts, together with its situation in the district, which we know to have successfully resisted Saxon invasion for so many years, are certainly evidence of some weight in favour of this identification.

[This identification, primarily due to the late Rev. J. A. Bennett, rector of South Cadbury, has been adopted by Strachey and Sommer, but, after a careful inspection of the whole site, the editor of this volume was unable to find evidence sufficient to justify the conclusion that the site was ever occupied by a city such as Silchester, Caerwent, Caerleon, or Gloucester. But the unknown author of "Sir Gawaine and the Green Knight" (about 1360) places Camelot in Somerset, an additional piece of evidence which escaped the notice of Mr. Bennett. Excavation, however, might throw fresh light on the subject.]

19. The "great stones," etc., are, no doubt, those of Caerleon (see note on l5. 9), which Caxton has confused with Camelot.

25. all .. alleged. See G.N. ix. 3.

26. deny but that. See G.N. ix. 5 (c).

30. French, *i.e.* chiefly in Norman or Anglo-French.

33. such ... English, *i.e.* such books. For the construction see G.N. ix. 4.

4. 3. Malorye. See Introduction, p. xxxiv.

7. Part I. The sources from which Malory has taken his first four books are: (1) *The Merlin*, by Robert de Boron; (2) The 'Ordinary or Vulgate Merlin'; (3) 'The Suite de Merlin.'

(1) Boron's *Merlin* is a poem in French. Malory followed a prose version.

(2) The 'Ordinary Merlin' is a prose rendering of Boron, *plus* a continuation.

(3) The 'Suite,' which is contained in the same ms. as (1), has been wrongly attributed to Boron, and the authorship is uncertain (O.S. III. 146).

In these selections the Ordinary Merlin is not represented. Of Part I. the first chapter is from Boron, and the remainder from the 'Suite.'

1. Uther Pendragon. Boron's romance contains a long account of the history of Merlin, of which the following is a very brief summary (see O.S. III. 16). The devils, alarmed at Christ's descent into hell, meet to discuss how they can again get mankind into their power. They conclude that they must have a man endowed with their powers, ready to beguile his fellows. So one of the fiends overcomes a virtuous woman, who is under the protection of a holy man named Blaise. The child, which is born, is covered with hair, and has the knowledge of the past, as being the offspring of the devil; and God gives him, for his mother's sake, the knowledge of the future. He is christened

Merlin, and miraculously saves his mother from the stake. He tells Blaise the history of Joseph, Alain, and of the Holy Vessel. (See Appendix, p. 236.)

1. Now Constantine the king had three sons—Moyne, Pendragon, and Uther. Moyne, on his father's death, is unable to successfully resist the heathen, and is murdered. Vortiger, the seneschal, is made king. Vortiger makes alliance with the heathen, and begins to build a strong tower, but the walls always break down. His wise men tell him that he must mix the mortar with the blood of a fatherless child. Merlin, who answers to this description, is seized, performs various prodigies, and tells the king that the real reason is that there are a red and a white dragon at the base of the tower. The king orders them to dig, and, in accordance with Merlin's prediction, the dragons are found, and the white dragon kills the red, and dies. This, Merlin says, portends the death of Vortiger. Accordingly Pendragon and Uther return and slay Vortiger. They next attack and slay Hengist (Aungier or Hengist). Merlin says the Saracens (Saxons) will return to avenge his death. When they come they are defeated near Salisbury, but Pendragon is killed. A red dragon appears in the sky. Uther is made king, and by Merlin's advice adopts the name of Uther-Pendragon. Merlin brings over great stones from Ireland to make a monument for Pendragon. Merlin then establishes the round table at Carduel in Wales, in imitation of the two sacred tables of Christ and Joseph of Arimathea. A seat is to be left void, which is to be occupied after Uther-Pendragon's days by a man who shall also accomplish the adventure of the void place at Joseph's table. In honour of the table all great feasts are to be held at Carduel. At one of these feasts Uther is smitten with the love of Igraine (Igraine). At this point Malory begins his tale.

**Pendragon** means Head-dragon. It is explained by Geoffrey of Monmouth (Bk. VIII. 17) to mean 'dragon's head'; and Uther is said to have carried with him to the wars a dragon made in commemoration of the fiery dragon which appeared at Winchester (*Ibid.* c. 14). Cf. Gildas' term of '*insularis draco*' (Intro. p. xi). This seems to mean 'war captain of the island.' In Welsh poetry a leader or king is commonly called 'a dragon,' and the Red Dragon (see preceding note) has always been the favourite flag of Wales. Rhys says this takes us back to the Augustan era of the Roman empire, when dragons began to figure in purple on the standards of some of the legions and to be borne before military leaders (*Celtic Britain*, p. 105). Malory also mentions a castle of Pendragon (Bk. IX. c. 6).

4. **Tintagil.** The ruins of a castle on a rocky peninsula, connected with the mainland by a rather perilous passage, may still be seen, but the existing remains are probably not older than the beginning of the thirteenth century.

14. **hath.** See G.N. ix. 5 (a).  
 19. **posterns**, back, or private, secret doors.  
 8. 7. **issue**, i.e. 'going out.' See *supra*, 7. 19.  
 28. **Ector**, called 'Antor' in the 'Ordinary Merlin.'  
 9. 1. **made affiance**, i.e. 'pledged himself.'  
 5. **and that ye deliver him.** See G.N. ix. 5 (a).  
 20. **St. Albans.** Geoffrey calls it by its Roman name of Verulamium, and the enemies are the Saxons.  
 10. 4. Geoffrey's account (*Historia*, viii. 24) is that he died by drinking from a spring which had been poisoned by the Saxons, and that he was buried in the Giant's Dance, i.e. in Stonehenge.  
 10. **archbishop of Canterbury.** Geoffrey says Arthur was crowned by Dubritius the Archbishop of Legions, which would apparently mean Caerleon, the seat of an ancient archbishopric. Dubritius appears to be an historical personage, and to have died about 560 A.D. (see Lee, *Isca Silurum*, p. 144). The story of the sword is not found in Geoffrey, but occurs in Boron's *Merlin* (see *Introd.* pp. xvi-xviii), and is a good instance of the way in which other legends were grafted by the romance writers on to the original story of Geoffrey.  
 13. **for this cause ... that Jesus, etc.** For the explanation of this involved construction, see G.N. ix. 2 (d).  
 11. 9. **and they to keep**, see G.N. ix. 5 (d) ii.  
 12. **a justs and a tournament**, and 19. **some to just, and some to tourney.** The tournament was a fight in which many knights joined; they were divided into parties, as in p. 106. Jousts were contests between single knights as in 16. 6. (cf. 18. 7). But Malory often uses the word in a general sense, as in 103. 11. Cf. Chaucer, *The Knightes Tale*, *Pars Quarta*.  
 23. **Nourished-brother**, i.e. foster-brother.  
 24. **Allhallowmas**, All Saints' Day, November 1, one of the most popular of the ancient feasts.  
 36. **handles.** This may be plural because the sword was a two handed one. Arthur's sword in his duel with Accolon has "sure handles" (31. 9). Cf. 41. 19.  
 12. 7-27. The two incidents comprised in these lines are Malory's own additions (*O.S.* iii. 28).  
 25. **No mastery.** Mastery means a 'masterly operation' as in Chaucer "That I wol doon a maistrie er I go" (the Chanouns Yemannes Tale, 507), and so 'this is no mastery' means 'this is an easy matter.' Cf. Chaucer, *Legend of Good Women*, *Prol.* later version, 400:

"For, Sir, hit is no maystrie for a lord .  
 To dampne a man withoute answeere of word."

13. *i. he was betaken him for to nourish him, i.e. 'How he was entrusted (to) him to be nourished,'* cf. 114. 9. See Glossary and G.N. II. 6 (c).

15. *but he.* See G.N. VII. 4 (d).

19. **Twelfth Day**, the Feast of Epiphany—twelve days after Christmas.

25. **Candlemas**. The Feast of the Purification of the Virgin Mary (Febr. 2nd), so called because of the number of lighted candles on the altar on that day.

14. 13. **commons**. The commons are not mentioned in Robert de Boron's *Merlin*, from which these chapters were taken by Malory. Malory apparently anticipates them from the 'Ordinary Merlin.' The prominence given to the commons by Malory may perhaps be due to the influence of contemporary history; for in much the same way the citizens rallied round the young Earl of March when he entered London in 1461, and shouted "Long live King Edward."

26. *held of the crown, i.e. tenants in capite, and to do service* is, of course to perform the ordinary feudal obligations. This is apparently Malory's own addition (*O.S.* III. 31). Cf. preceding note.

29. *that were bereaved lords, etc., i.e. "were stolen from lords."* Cf. "how Sir Launcelot had bereft him his queen" (142. 8). So in Chaucer, "Ther is no wight that wol me woe bereve," *Minor Poems*, VI. 12 (Skeat's ed.). See G.N. II. 11 (1).

32. *that is probably consecutive and the preceding 'so' omitted,* see G.N. VII. 9.

15. 9. **Carlion**. Caerleon, or Caer Legion, the city of the legion, is the old Isca Silurum. It was originally a fortified camp, established during the subjugation of the Silures, between the years A.D. 50 and 75, on the river Usk, about six miles from its mouth. It became the permanent station of the Legio Secunda Augusta, as we know from inscriptions found there. As a Romano-British city, it was possessed of considerable importance, and it seems to have been the seat of an archbishopric. It was for many years the chief city in South Wales. For a list of historical references to Caerleon between the ninth and thirteenth centuries, the reader is referred to Lee's *Isca Silurum* (pp. 138-142). Henry of Huntingdon says that in his time the walls were scarcely to be seen (*M.H.B.* p. 692). Newport, some two miles lower down the river, whose castle was probably built by Robert, the natural son of Henry I., gradually grew in importance at the expense of Caerleon, which is now not much more than a village. It possesses a museum in which are deposited a great number of Roman remains.

10. Between this and the last line comes in Malory a long

account of Arthur's wars and the story of the "questing beast" (see Table, p. 254). Malory now follows the 'Suite de Merlin.'

13. **hath slain.** See G.N. ix. 5 (a).

20. **service.** In the account of Arthur's wars (see note on line 10), Griflet is a knight who has, with Sir Lucas and Sir Kay, the "rule of all the service" (M. i. 10). He does great deeds in the war with the eleven kings (M. i. 12). This is a good instance of the confusion and contradiction involved in Malory's compilation.

16. 4. **thou.** See G.N. iv. 1 (b).

32. **gat him wind, fanned him, etc.** The repetition of the words in line 34 is an instance of careless writing, of which other examples may be found, e.g. on p. 17, 4-6, where "or it be day" is repeated.

17. 12. and (they) would. For this omission of the subject, see G.N. ix. 1 (a). The reason for this conduct on the part of the three "villains" is omitted by Malory. In the 'Suite,' Merlin tells Arthur that it was because he had foretold to them their near death; and he explains that having quarrelled about a horse which they had bought on the road, two of them, who were brothers, would kill the third, their cousin, and be hanged on reaching the next town (O.S. III. 65).

18. 28. **like two rams.** Malory's own addition. He is fond of such similes. See Introduction, p. xxv.

19. 5. **that,** is of course demonstrative.

30. **Percivale.** One of the heroes in the Quest of the Grail. See p. 54.

32. **sister's son.** Mordred. See Introduction, pp. xxii, xxiii.

20. 9. **that I spake of.** Malory has forgotten that he omitted Merlin's suggestion that Arthur should postpone the fight with the knight of the fountain till he had a good sword, and Merlin's remark, when they approach the lake, that they will find a sword there (O.S. III. 69).

11. **Lady of the lake, Nimue.** See 175. 2.

21. 20. For the evil suffered by Arthur through losing both sword and scabbard, see c. iv.

23. **Merlin's craft** is another addition by Malory.

22. 2. **by adventure and by grace,** i.e. the 'adventure of the sword' and the grace of God.

14. **Guenever.** Malory in his First Book (c. xvi. in Globe ed.) tells us that after Arthur's wars with the eleven kings, he went to Cameliard and rescued Leodegrance from his enemies, "and there had Arthur the first sight of Guenever, the king's daughter of Cameliard, and ever after he loved her." Geoffrey calls her

Guanhumara, "descended from a noble family of Romans, who was educated under Duke Cadur, and in beauty surpassed all the women of the island" (Bk. IX. c. 9).

23. 3. wist I. See G.N. II. 5 (a).

5. Table Round. Geoffrey makes no mention of the Round Table. Wace (9999), however, says that Arthur made the Round Table, 'dont Breton dient mainte fable,' for his barons, of whom each thought that he was the best, and that they sat there all equally and that none could boast that he sat higher than his fellows. Layamon has elaborated or added to this account. He says that Arthur went to Cornwall, and there came to him a crafty workman who says that he has heard how Arthur's barons quarrelled about precedence and fought at his board so that many fell. He offers to make a board at which 1600 men and more may sit

" . . . al turn abuten  
That nan ne beon with uten  
With uten and with inne  
Mon to-geines monne."

The work was completed in four weeks, and at a high day the folk were assembled, and Arthur himself approached the board and ordered all his knights to sit down. The "Merlin" account of the Round Table is given in the note on 7. 1. Malory tells us (M. XIV. 2) that "Merlin made it in tokening of the roundness of the world, for by the Round Table is the world signified by right." Professor Rhys thinks that the roundness is accidental and that the Table "possibly means that Arthur's court was the first early court where those present sat at a table at all in Britain." But, if by Arthur he means the historic Arthur, this is, of course, impossible. Rhys adds, "in a wider sense the Round Table possibly signified plenty or abundance, and might be compared with the Table of the Ethiopians at which Zeus and the other gods of Greek mythology used to feast from time to time" (R. A. L. 9). Wace's account, however, which seems to be the oldest, is plausible enough.

27. twenty and eight. A mistake of Malory's for forty-eight, as given in the 'Suite' ms. (O.S. III. 101).

24. 1. two sieges. One of them was occupied by Pellinor (M. III. 4). For the other, see Pt. II., ch. i.

12. charged them. Here we have an epitome of knightly duty as understood in the best age of chivalry.

Ch. IV. In this story, typical for its intermixture of magic and knightly deeds, Malory follows his ms. ('Suite'), with only minor variations and omissions (O.S. III. 130-143).

25. 6. water bank, i.e. the bank of a great water. See G.N. I. 2.



18. The torches and the great light are a picturesque addition by Malory.

26. 1. Morgan le Fay was Arthur's own sister. She "was put to school in a nunnery, and there she learned so much that she was a great clerk of nigromancy" (M. i. 2); but "she loved another knight better than her husband, King Uriens, or King Arthur: and she would have had Arthur, her brother, slain" (M. ii. 11). The 'Suite' ms. (O.S. iii. 127) says she hated Arthur, not because he had wronged her, but because disloyal and wicked folk always hate the valiant, *et ont vers eus rancune qui tousjours dure*; cf. 33. 8-10.

11. This story of a younger brother, forcibly deprived by an older brother of his property, and of the manor held only by force, is quite characteristic of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, and shows clearly how contemporary history was mixed up with the older tales of wonder. In the Paston Letters may be found a very interesting account of a similar event. John Paston and Lord Moleyns were at feud about the manor of Gresham, of which the latter took possession. Paston, unable to obtain legal redress, followed Moleyns' example and seized and occupied a house in Gresham, which he held for three months. But on January 28, 1450, an armed band of 1000 men, during Paston's absence, broke into and sacked the whole house, and, says Paston in his petition, "if thei might have found ther yowr seid besecher and on (one) John Damme which is of counsell with hym ... thei shuld have died" (Gardner's ed., Nos. 77 and 107).

27. 28. and also. We must understand 'Sir Arthure was sworn.' See G.N. ix. 1 (g).

32. that ... he. See G.N. iv. 3 (f).

28. 4. all where. See G.N. v. 3.

5. find, supply 'them.'

10. prime. The ritual adopted about the period of St. Benedict included the following services: (1) Nocturns or Matins, before daylight; (2) Lauds, early morning; (3) Prime, later in the morning; (4) Tierce, at 9 a.m.; (5) Sext, at noon; (6) Nones, at 3 p.m.; (7) Vespers, in the evening; (8) Compline, at bedtime. The services of these hours were called the "Canonical Hours," and in the eleventh century they were collected into a book called the *Portifory* or *Breviary*.

14. ye had promised her. When this was Malory does not say, but we are told (M. ii. 11) that Arthur, for love of his sister, entrusted her with the scabbard of Excalibur, and that she returned to him a counterfeit scabbard, giving the genuine one to her lover (see note on 26. 1). Malory adds "and the knight's name was called Accolon, that after had near slain King Arthur."

29. 22. **twelve good men**, *i.e. boni homines*, the equivalent of 'freemen.' There appears to be some confusion here. The trial by combat was the regular way under the Normans of settling such quarrels in a feudal manor, but afterwards the plan was introduced of deciding such cases by the oaths of a jury.

36. **the damsel of the lake**, Nimue, who is always Artkar's friend. Cf. pp. 20 and 175. She is called Niviene in the 'Suite' MS., and is the Vivien of Tennyson's *Merlin and Vivien*.

30. 1. **Merlin**. This story is told in the 'Suite de Merlin' MS. Merlin had persecuted her with his lovemaking, and she, to rid herself of this annoyance, enticed him to a tomb wherein two lovers rested, and persuaded him to lift, by his magic power, the huge stone which covered their bodies. She afterwards enchanted Merlin so that he could not stir hand or foot, and bade her men put him in the tomb and replace the stone. Tennyson has followed another version.

13. **bit not steel**. In the French romance of *Merlin*, the name Excalibur is said to be Hebrew and to mean *t.ès cher fer et acier*, but in the English metrical version the sword is said to have borne the inscription:

"Ich am yhote (called) Escalibore  
Unto a king fair tresore,"

and it is added in explanation:

"On Inglis is this writing  
'Kerve steel and yren and al thing.'"

(quoted by Wright in his ed. of Malory, Vol. I., p. 18).

Among other famous swords may be mentioned those of Charlemagne and Roland, named respectively 'Joyeuse' and 'Durendal.'

31. 9. **handles**. See note on 11. 36.

12. **bated no cheer**, did not change countenance, lose courage (see Glossary, *s.v.* cheer).

32. 6. **he**, *i.e.* Arthur.

7. **his side**, *i.e.* Accolon's.

34. 11. **that I am holden withal**. Possibly this means 'of whom I hold,' *i.e.* 'hold my lands.'

35. 25. **elders' foundation**, *i.e.* founded by your ancestors. Geoffrey (vi. c. 15) speaks of a "monastery of Ambrius," which would seem to mean 'founded by Ambrosius,' who, according to Geoffrey, was the son of Constantine and brother of Uther. This monastery is generally identified with Amesbury, near Salisbury.

37. 6. **a forty**. See G.N. I. 1.

29. **Gore**, or Gower, dimly seen from the southern side of the Severn Sea, represented, according to Rhys, the realm of the other world, the abode of the dead. He also identifies "Morgan" with the Welsh *Morgen*, seaborne; Irish *Muirgen*, one of the names of the 'aquatic lady Liban' (R. A. L., p. 22).

38. **Part II. The Noble Tale of the Sancgreal.** For an account of the various versions of the Grail legend, and of the source from which Malory took these books, the reader is referred to the Appendix, p. 234.

**Sancgreal.** This word has been falsely derived from 'sang real,' true blood, a confusion no doubt due to the use to which, in the legend, the grail was put (see Appendix, p. 236). The word grail (L. Lat. *gradale*) means a dish. Cf. "This is the holy dish wherein I ate the lamb on Sher-Thursday" (96. 16).

38. 11. **Pelles** is here (see 43. 14) the grandfather of Galahad, the hero of the Quest, and he is also the king of the castle of Carbonek, the Grail Castle (see 93. 22, and 94. 25).

39. 28. **falleth you.** A curious instance of the change from indirect to direct speech. See G.N. ix. 5 (a).

40. 2. **sieges.** See 23. 36.

5. **siege perilous.** See 24. 1, and note. In a passage in the 'Suite' omitted by Malory, Merlin was asked why he called this seat 'perilous.' Merlin replied that it was because no knight except the best in the world could occupy it, and he would not do so for long (O.S. III. 98).

6. It is to be noticed that this chronology is purely fanciful, for, assuming Arthur to have been an historic personage, his date would have certainly been later, and it accords but ill with the relationship of the Promised Knight to the Grail keeper (either nephew or grandson). See Appendix, p. 236.

7. **accomplished.** See G.N. ix. 3.

10. **In the name of God.** A form of assent that appears in more familiar form in 51. 32.

41. 19. **handles.** See 11. 36, and note.

21. For the fulfilment of this prophecy, see p. 77.

42. 3. **abashed.** See G.N. II. 11 (4).

10. **red arms.** The 'Queste' itself supplies the explanation which Malory has omitted, "As at Whitsuntide the Holy Spirit came to the Apostles in guise of fire, so at Whitsuntide Galahad came clad in red armour" (Nutt, p. 43).

14. **kindred of Joseph of Arimathe.** The hero of the quest in the Celtic tale is of kin to the Grail keeper, whether he be Broun or Joseph. See Appendix, p. 236.

32. **king Pelles.** Malory has here, "and unto my lord Petchere," where the 'Queste' has "mon aioul le rich pescheoure." Malory has taken the 'Rich Fisher' (see Appendix, p. 236) to be a proper name.

43. 2. **and was.** For the omission of the subject, see G.N. ix. 1 (a).

3. **all only by God, i.e.** 'they knew that all came only by God.' See G.N. ix. 1 (g); cf. 79. 8.

6. **his son.** There are two distinct versions in Malory of the Launcelot and Elaine story—one as we have it in these selections (p. 101), and another in which Launcelot has a son by Elaine owing to the enchantments of dame Brisen (M. xi. 2). This son is Galahad.

45. 17. **meats and drinks.** Here we have the Celtic idea of a bowl with physical properties. See Appendix, pp. 236, 237.

26. **Gawaine.** It must be remembered that in *Chrestien*, Gawaine is one of the original heroes of the Quest (see Appendix, p. 235). Gawaine's character in Malory is not that of the Gawaine of the other romances. See Introduction, p. xxxi.

46. 13. **it shall grieve me ... the departition,** a curious construction due to the fondness for impersonal verbs. See G.N. ii. 10.

33. **for the love of the knights** and regret at their departure. See G.N. ix. 5 (c).

47. 1. **religious clothing, the garb of a hermit or priest.**

3. **Nacien the hermit.** See note on 49. 8. The fact that Nacien is dead and buried is of little importance amid the many other contradictions involved in the tale.

4. Here we see an obvious instance of the monkish view of the position of women.

48. 30. **white abbey.** The Benedictines wore a black habit. The reformed orders changed this for a white one. Among these reformed orders the Cistercians were perhaps the chief, and they were mercilessly assailed by Map and the wits of his time. Map could hardly have written a chapter like this, for the author, whoever he was, evidently did not hold the popular view quoted by Giraldus: "A Cistercian has a white exterior, but an interior the contrary of whiteness." The 'White Monks' are mentioned in the 'Queste' several times, and always with respect. It is also worthy of notice that the great Cistercian Abbey of Tintern was founded on the banks of the Wye in 1131.

49. 8. In the Early History of the Grail, as told in the 'Queste,'

we learn that Joseph's son, Josephes, helped Evelake, the Saracen king of Sarras, to conquer his enemies by means of a shield with a cross on it. Evelake and his brother-in-law, Seraphe, are converted and christened Mordrains and Nasciens. They subsequently invade Britain, where Josephes is in prison, release him, and receive from him a shield marked with a cross made by the blood streaming from his nose. This cross will remain red, and the shield shall not be unhung with impunity till Galahad, the last of Nasciens' line, shall come. The shield is to be kept where Nasciens lies buried. Malory has an account of this (M. XIII. 9).

9. but that if. See G.N. VII. 4 (c).

12. 'In the name of God. See note on 40. 10.

35. rest, the hook on the saddle or in the breastplate on which the spear rested. For an illustration of it, see the well-known engraving by Albert Durer of the knight on which La Motte Fouqué founded his story of *Sintram*.

50. 17. behoveth to no man. See Glossary.

52. 2. clothes covered, i.e. 'cloths laid.'

23. rites, confession, extreme unction and absolution, and the administration of the Lord's Supper. Caxton spells it 'rightes.'

53. 6. asked his Saviour, i.e. asked for the administration of the Lord's Supper.

17. turned unto helping, a fine phrase for 'he was beginning to mend.'

24. clean confession. Either proleptically, 'confession that makes clean,' or complete, full confession. See Glossary, s.v. 'clean.'

54. 4. deadly sins. These were seven: Pride, Covetousness, Lust, Anger, Gluttony, Envy, Sloth.

Ch. iv. Sir Percivale, it must be noted (see Appendix, p. 238), has lost his place as the chief hero of the Quest, but many of the incidents that originally belonged to his story are still retained in Malory, e.g. his visit (omitted in these selections) to his aunt, the Lady of the Waste Lands. In the Conte, this lady would have been his mother.

55. 7. do thankings, *gratias agere*. See also G.N. II. 7 (a).

13. and to be, etc., i.e. 'and as I may be your true knight ... (I beg) that ye will lend me.' See G.N. VII. 2 (a), IX. 1 (g), and 5 (b).

14. first place ye will require me. See G.N. IV. 3 (i).

19, 20. that ... that. See G.N. IX. 2 (c).

58. 14. the lion and he. Spenser no doubt took from this his idea of Una and the lion,

30. **that ye have ... and have not offended.** **that** = 'as to that which.' See G.N. iv. 3 (i), and cf. 74. 21. For omission of the subject of **have**, see G.N. ix. 1 (a).

35. **me. i.e. to me.** See G.N. iv. 1 (d).

59. 6. **my man.** The vassal was 'the man' of his lord, to whom he did 'homage' as the outward sign of this relation.

7. **never but my servant, i.e. never anyone's servant but mine.**

8. **received the homage of our Lord.** This is difficult to explain. Possibly it is a confusion (of a kind very common in Malory) between 'receiving our Lord' (cf. 53. 7), and 'doing homage to our Lord' (cf. 60. 33, and 70. 1).

15. **was ware in the sea, and saw.** See G.N. ix. 2 (e).\*

18. **at the board, on the deck.**

60. 7. **quit.** This jingle on the two senses of the word is probably intentional.

61. 5. **red knight, Sir Galahad.**

30. Note the ingenuity of the temptress, who appeals to the pity of Sir Percivale, and to his sense of duty as a knight.

62. 29. **strongest wine.** The 'Queste' has it 'good wine, not British, as in Britain they only drink *cervoise* (*cerevisia*, beer), and other home-made drinks' (Nutt, p. 44). It must be remembered that the 'Queste' is only written in French as being the court language of England.

63. 21. **which said, Sir Percivale, etc.** This is, I think, wrongly punctuated in the Globe edition. It should read 'Which, said Sir Percivale, ye have betrayed me.' Percivale is the speaker, and the lady the traitress. For the use of 'which,' see G.N. iv. 3 (d).

33. **ship.** See p. 59.

64. 12. **most brightest angel.** Cf. Milton, *Par. Lost*, l. 84:

"If thou beest he: but O how fall'n! how chang'd  
From him, who in the happy realms of light  
Cloth'd with transcendant brightness didst outshine  
Myriads though bright!"

Ch. v. The story of Gawaine, as told in this chapter, shows him in a very unfavourable light, whereas in the 'Conte del Graal' (see Appendix, p. 235) he is next only to Perceval. The introduction of a character such as this shows that the author of the 'Queste' was possessed of enough discrimination to see that the chief characters wanted a foil in order to enhance their virtuous deeds. And certainly the contrast is welcome, for were it not for these knights of baser clay, the story would be as wearisome to us as the hermit's advice is to Gawaine

66. 3. **teach us**, direct us. Cf. "I shal myself to herbes techen yow" (Chaucer, *Nonne Preestes Tale*, 129).

6. **Nacien**. See 47. 3.

26. **when she is bridled**, i.e. 'when abstinence is like a bridle.'

67. 1. **commonly have the better**. See G.N. ix. 1 (g).

2. **The adventure of the Sangreal**. See G.N. ix. 4.

4. **of it**. The 'it' is redundant. See G.N. iv. 3 (f).

7. **signifieth**, the subject is "other things." See G.N. ii. 1 (c).

68. Ch. vi. **Sir Bors**. The temptation of Sir Bors has been omitted as being a repetition of the temptation of Sir Percivale. It has, however, one characteristic touch: the ladies threaten if Bors is unkind to throw themselves from the castle walls—"not for that ... lever he had they all had lost **their souls than he his**." The most remarkable part of the story seems to be the quarrel between Bors and Lionel, which is apparently entirely due to the author of the 'Queste.' It is repeated in Manessier.

2. **religious man**, monk or hermit, i.e. one of the 'regular' as opposed to the 'secular' clergy.

69. 24. For the change from Indirect to Direct Speech, see G.N. ix. 5 (a); and for the confusion of 'thou' and 'ye,' see G.N. iv. 1 (a).

27. **that . . . that**. See G.N. ix. 2 (b).

70. 1. **liege man**. Cf. 59. 8 and note.

71. 8. **lady's nephew of Hervin**. Dr. Sommer thinks that this is some extraordinary corruption of the French which runs, *et de la veue dame de chaieans*. (O.S. III. 217.)

24. **suffered me**, sc. 'to be.' See G.N. ix. 1 (c).

73. 14. **worthiest knight of the world one**. See G.N. III. 2.

74. 11. **bear**. Wynkyn de Worde (Wright's reprint of the 1634 ed.) has 'be,' which certainly makes better sense.

21. **that**, i.e. 'as to that which.' See 58. 30 and note.

24. **be to me**, i.e. let them be to me.

75. 30. **broken wall**. What this signifies is not clear. It is not mentioned in Nutt's *Summary*.

76. Ch. vii. The story of the Ship seems to be entirely due to the author of the 'Queste.'

18. **rescued**. See 54. 13-23.

77. 16. **him**, i.e. Galahad. Ector was Launcelot's brother, and so uncle to Galahad.

17. **he**, i.e. Galahad.

31. **leech found**. See G.N. ix. 1 (g).

32 **and to be whole**. See G.N. ix. 5 (b).

36. **Carboneck.** The Grail Castle, see pp. 90 and 94, where the maimed king lay; but Galahad has not come there yet, and the words "that night," seem to be transposed from the following line. Cf. 94. 12.

80. 2. **he**, i.e. Jesu Christ.

3. **him**, i.e. the man who enters.

7. **blessed him**, i.e. crossed himself.

20. **Calidone.** This looks like a reference to the Caledonian Forest, the *Coed Celyddon* of the Welsh, and the *Καληδόνιος Ἀπυμός* of Ptolemy. Rhys (*Celtic Britain*, p. 225) says that it stretched from the west of the district of Menteith, in the neighbourhood of Loch Lomond, across the country to Dunkeld, and that it formed, in part at least, the boundary between the Caledonians and the Verturiones, or the Brythons of Fortrenn.

81. 11. **poorly to come to**, i.e. a poor thing to get. See G.N. II. 6 (b).

13. **harder**, as the French has *plus preus*, this must mean *plus hardi*, 'hardier,' 'bolder.' (O.S. III. 218.) Cf. line 17.

15. **body of him**. See G.N. IX. 4.

29. **Pelles**. The story of Pelles is the 'Queste' version of the story of Fisher King, the Grail Keeper (see Appendix, p. 236). The idea of the Feud Quest is lost and the wound is accounted for in a different way.

82. 4. **he was smitten him**. See G.N. II. 10.

29. **mover of blood**. Caxton printed 'mever,' another form of the same word. Sommer (III. 219) says this is some extraordinary mistake as the French runs "*et li fuerres a a non memoire de sens*."

**that hath blood in him**. This appears to mean 'is a murderer.' Cf. 67. 6-11.

84. 16. **held the journey**, i.e. held or kept the day's work, kept fighting all day.

**in like hard**, Caxton has 'in lyke hard,' and I venture to suggest that he has transposed the 'hard'; what was really written being 'hardilyke,' M.E. for 'boldly.' Or 'in like hard' may mean 'with equal difficulty.' Chaucer uses 'of hard' for 'with difficulty' (*Troilus and Criseyde*, II. 1236).

31. **which we**, etc., i.e. 'as to which.' See G.N. IV. 3 (d).

85. 17. **So she was**, supply 'brought forth.'

32. **Sarras**, the city of King Evelake (see 49. 8 and note), to which the Grail was afterwards taken (see 98. 6), and the burial place of Galahad, Percivale, and his sister. Prof. Rhys (*R. A. L.* 395) suggests that Sarras may be the equivalent of the Welsh *Gwanas*; *Gwanas Gwyr*, the Point of Gower, called also simply *Gwanas*, being one of the most remarkable of Welsh burying



places. But it may at least be suggested that it is only the old name of Tyre brought back by the Crusaders. Cf. Verg. *Georg.* II. 506. "*Sarrano indormiat ostro*," and Milton's "grain of Sarra" (*Par. Lost*, XI. 243).

33. **spiritual place.** Tennyson has elaborated this idea in the *Holy Grail*:

"And straight beyond the star  
I saw the spiritual city and all her spires  
And gateways in a glory like one pearl."

86. 3. **asked her Saviour.** See note on 53. 6.

87. 14. **Mortoise**, as it is rehearsed before. Malory in a previous passage (omitted in these selections) related how Launcelet came to a water 'which was hideous.' Its name is not mentioned, but a reference to the 'Queste' shows it to be the Water of Mortoise, or Marcoise, as it is there called. At this water he was attacked and overthrown by a black knight (M. xv. 6).

21. **blessed him.** See 80. 7.

25. Note again that the influence of the Grail is physical as well as spiritual. Cf. 45. 17.

88. 7. **If ye would ask**, etc. See G.N. IX. 1 (g).

90. 7. **two lions.** Bunyan seems to have borrowed from this his incident of Pilgrim and the lions before the Palace Beautiful.

91. 4. For the ellipsis of 'I pray,' see G.N. IX. 1 (g).

20. **three men.** This I suppose is the Trinity (cf. 97. 36), and the incident is a kind of materialistic explanation of the doctrine of the Real Presence (cf. 95. 28). Here again we seem to have a possible reference to contemporary history. About 1080, Lanfranc wrote his famous *Liber Scintillarum*, in which "he defended the theory of Transubstantiation as the orthodox doctrine of the Eucharist, and strove to prove heretical the opposite view of Berengar of Tours, which was closely related to the ideas of the Old English Church" (Ten Brink, I. 128).

32. **that is consecutive**, 'so that.' See G.N. VII. 9.

92. 20. **also many**, 'even so many.' See G.N. V. 3.

35. **hair.** In the passage omitted in these selections Malory related (M. xv. 2) how Launcelet took on himself to wear the hair (shirt) of a dead hermit, and how another hermit counselled him.

93. 2. **hermit.** See preceding note.

29. **white abbey**, see 48. 30, and note.

94. 7. **one of them**, viz. Bors; see 100. 29.

12. **till that he came**, he does not come there till I. 23. Cf. 77. 36.

14. **the adventures of Logris were achieved**, *i.e.* Britain would not be freed from enchantments, a purely Celtic feature (see Appendix, p. 236). Launcelot had partly achieved these adventures.

16. **met at travers with**, *i.e.* came across.

95. 13. **Joseph**, *i.e.* Joseph, the son of Joseph of Arimathea.

28. **in likeness of a child**. See note on 91. 20.

35. **ye shall be fed**. Note again the life-preserving properties possessed by the Grail, cf. 87. 25.

96. 24. **he**, God, implied by the mention of the Grail.

97. 9. **white monks**. See 48. 30.

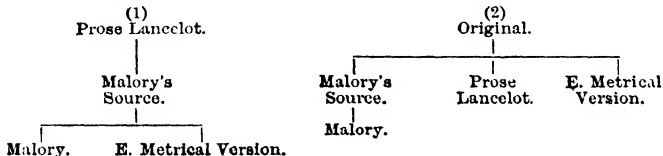
36. **blessed Trinity**. See 91. 20.

99. 14. **self day**. This seems to mean on the anniversary of his crowning.

25. **deadly**, *i.e.* mortal.

100. 28. **spiritualties**, a variant, apparently, for the 'spiritual place.'

101. **Parts III., IV., and V.** of these selections (M., Bks. xviii., xx., and xxi.) correspond to 'La Mort au Roi Artus,' which forms the fourth part of the great prose romance of *Lancelot* (see Introduction, p. xxii). Malory has, however, not taken his version directly from the prose *Lancelot*; his source is either itself taken from the prose *Lancelot*, or else both come from a common original. There is also an English Metrical Version (Harl. MS. 2252, published by Furnivall in 1864) which stands in the same relation to Malory's source as that does to the prose *Lancelot* (O.S. III. 220). This will be better understood by the following tables representing the two alternative hypotheses.



Dr. Sommer (III. 250) seems to definitely adopt the first of these relationships.

Malory knew of this English Metrical Version and has often used its very words, as will be shown in the notes.

**Part III. Elaine.** As stated before (note on 43. 6), there are two Elaines in Malory, or rather two different versions of the same story. The one we have here is worked out at great length, and has been closely followed by Tennyson in his *Idylls*

*of the King.* The interest which the story possesses is chiefly a literary one, and though Elaine may, as Professor Rhys would show, be only one of the ladies in a Celtic Peredur folk-tale, it is more pleasant to lose sight of this side of the question and give oneself up to the enjoyment of the prose of Malory and the sweet verse of the poet, who alike present her to us as

“ Elaine the fair, Elaine the loveable,  
Elaine the lily maid of Astolat.”

19. **promise and perfection.** See Pt. II., c. viii.

102. 6. **Lady day, Assumption,** i.e. the 15th August, on which day was celebrated the festival of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary. According to ancient tradition her body as well as her soul were taken up to heaven from Ephesus.

8. **justs and a tournament.** See note on 11. 12.

9. **Camelot.** See note on 3. 19.

29. **Sir Mador.** The Queen had given a dinner to the court at which Sir Patrise died from eating a poisoned apple which had been secretly prepared by Sir Pinel in order to poison Gawaine. Sir Mador, Pinel's cousin, then 'appeached' the Queen of treason, and Sir Launcelot, taking up the cause of the Queen, fought with and overcame Sir Mador, but was himself badly wounded (M. xviii., cc. 3-7).

32. **Astolat,** is in the English metrical version, Ascalot, and the Maid of Ascalot appears to have suggested to Tennyson his earlier poem of the *Lady of Shalott*, published in 1833.

104. 30. **le Blank,** the white, the 'Lily Maid' of Tennyson.

105. 30. **blew unto the field,** cf. 109. 24.

108. 21. **left, remained.** See G.N. II. 11 (4).

109. 22. **what knight that he is.** See G.N. IV. 3 (a).

24. **blew unto lodging.** Cf. 105. 30.

110. 28. **wilful poverty,** i.e. voluntary.

32. **never.** This is probably redundant, being only a repetition of the negative implied in "giveth," i.e. 'misgives,' cf. 128. 13.

112. 14. **hermits held great household.** This shows that Malory had no very exact idea of what was meant by a hermit; he uses the word, indeed, quite loosely for a 'religious' man: and the head of a great abbey, as we may suppose so great a knight as Sir Baudewin to have been, would certainly have had a big household. For Sir Baudewin, see 14. 34.

114. 9. **betook him,** entrusted to him; i.e. to Launcelot, cf. 13. 1.

29. **for never, etc.,** i.e. 'for never, before that time, loved I any one for any knight that I ever saw.' The *erst* repeats 'or that time.'

115. 6. great pity ... of earthly knight, "great" seems to = greatest, "of" = as regards; see G.N. vi.

117. 1. that, i.e. which.

119. 25. rewarded. See G.N. ii. 5 (b).

120. 26. early nor late. See G.N. v. 2 (e).

35. nor nought I will. This seems to mean 'nor do I wish anything else.'

121. 16. received her Creator, i.e. received the Eucharist.

122. 9. laid, apparently this is for 'led': cf. line 18.

123. 22. mass-penny, the sum given in a purse by the mourners at a funeral during the saying or singing of mass (Lee, *Gloss. of Liturg. Terms*).

124. 13. loseth, a misprint of the Globe ed. for 'looseth.' This recalls the lines:

"But if ne'er so close ye wall him  
Do the best that you may,  
Blind love if so ye call him  
Will find out the way."

Anon. lyric in Palgrave's *Golden Treasury*.

125. Part IV. For the source from which Malory drew this part of his story, see p. 223. Many passages are evidently taken from the English Metrical Version, which will be quoted as E.M.V.

1-9. The lines describing May and Summer are Malory's own and recall the opening lines of Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*. The second canto of the romance of *Gawaine and the Green Knight*, written about 1360, also contains a long passage in which the four seasons are described with great beauty and vigour. These lines are more or less a repetition of a former chapter, 'How true love is likened to summer' (M. xviii. 25). Here they serve, as no doubt was intended, to heighten by contrast the gloom and darkness of the last great scene of the tragedy, the theme of which is the punishment which necessarily follows on sin. See Introduction, p. xxiii.

6. 80. Caxton has printed a capital S, but the sense is clearer if a comma is placed after 'fire.' For the "as," see G.N. vii. 2 (d).

10. Agravaine. The four sons of Lot and his wife Morgause, Arthur's sister, were Gawaine, Agravaine, Gaheris, and Gareth. Agravaine alone of these four brothers sides openly with Mordred, but he is never represented in the same unfavourable light. He fights and is slain, while Mordred flies. For the character of Gawaine, see Introduction, p. xxxi.

126. 6. will grant, i.e. 'will agree,' see Gloss. : for the redundant "thereto," see G.N. ix. 2 (d).

## 11. war and wrake,

"Yit were it better to hele and layne  
Than werre and wrake thus to begynne."

E. M. V., 1694.

(Hele and layne = to hide and conceal.)

16. full cold at the heartroot. This fine expression is certainly Malory's own.

20. Carados of the dolorous tower. Malory (Bk. vi., cc. 7-9) relates how Turquin, who had a special hatred for Launcelot because "he slew my brother Sir Carados at the dolorous tower," had carried off Sir Gaheris. Launcelot, after a mighty battle, slew Turquin, rescued Gaheris, and released many prisoners, but Agravaine and Mordred are not mentioned among their number.

## 127. 21. noise, rumour, talk.

128. 7. Carlisle. The scene of this book appears to be entirely in the North.

## 13. gave my heart,

"Ne never yit gaffe myn herte to ille  
So mykelle as it dothe to-night."

E. M. V., 1782.

129. 27. well I am well assured. The second 'well' is inserted by error in the Globe edition and should have been omitted here.

28. nephew. Lancelot and Bors, according to the beginning of the story, are cousins, being sons respectively of Ban, King of Benwick, and his brother Bors, King of Gaul.

130. 25. Colgrevice of Gore. This must be a different knight from the Colgrevice of the Grail story (pp. 73, 74), or else Malory has forgotten his death at the hands of Sir Lionel.

## 35. wit ye well.

"Now know thou wele Syr Agravayne,  
Thow presons me no more to Nyght."

E. M. V., 1852.

131. 11. maugre thy head, 'in spite of thee.' Cf. "maugre thy visage" (143. 22); but see 152. 34, and note.

16. mightily and knightly: an improvement on the "with mykelle mayn" of the E. M. V., 1854.

18. laid them cold to the earth. Malory again is much more poetical in his prose than the author of the E. M. V., who has it

"Syr Agrawayne to dethe yode (went)  
And sythen alle the other presse."

1858.

Later on the E. M. V. has the same idea much less finely expressed:

"We have begonne thys ilke nyght  
That shalle brynge many a man fulle colde."

1886.

132. 10. of good heart. "Bot bethe of herte good and bolde" (E.M.V., 1881).

20. woe ... weal: "aftyр the wele to take the wo" (E.M.V., 1891).

32. that ye may, that which you can.

forth-days. Omit the hyphen unnecessarily inserted in the Globe edition, and see G.N. v. 1 (b).

133. 4. do my pain, do my best.

10. what. See G.N. iv. 3 (e).

14. well willed, possessed of a good will. See G.N. II. 11 (5).

25. for because, etc. This passage is discussed in G.N. ix, 5 (d).

33. taken, means either 'accepted,' i.e. as a champion, or else 'understood,' 'believed.'

134. 4. keep yourself, 'pay regard to,' 'consider your own duty and dignity.' Launcelot here appears much in want of encouragement, and Bors is the strong, masterful man determined that Launcelot shall not incur further dishonour.

will yourself, i.e. keep yourself. See G.N. ix. 1 (g).

135. 6. Tristram. The story of Tristram and La Beale Isoud is told by Malory in Books VIII. to X., though this is the only allusion to his death. Tristram was perhaps the most popular knight of the whole series of romance. The story is the subject of Swinburne's *Tristram of Lyonesse* and Matthew Arnold's *Tristram and Iseult*.

7. Joyous Gard. Either Bamborough or Alnwick; the name recalls the 'Chateau Gaillard' on the Seine, of such importance to Richard I.

136. 14. may not. We must suppose an elision of 'allow' or some such word. See G.N. ix. 1 (c).

20. either the men or the taking with the deed. This is obscure; "the men" seems to mean 'the slaying of the men,' and is explained by, "because Mordred was escaped sore wounded, and the death of thirteen knights," which are said in the following lines to be "the proofs."

21. hasty judgment, means immediate sentence without trial.

137. 5. weening to her, 'supposing to herself.'

15. Note the distrust of the Ordeal by Battle as a fair means of settling a case.

141. 20. All Gawaine's wrath against Launcelot is thus due to his desire to avenge the death of his favourite brother, for the others and even for his sons he cares not at all.

142. 4. in the length and the breadth, cf. "overthwart and endlong" (181. 1).

8. bereft him his queen : a double object ; cf. 14. 29.  
 20. as he might suffice. See G.N. II. 10.  
 26. he would, supply 'allow' : see G.N. IX. 1 (c).  
 143. 22. *maugre thy visage*, 'in spite of you' ; cf. 131. 11.  
 23. whether it please him, i.e. to slay or to spare you, or 'whether' = if. See G.N. VII. 15.  
 144. 7. blow upon, to challenge by trumpet.  
 145. 30. "Allas, quod Launcelot, wo is me  
 That euyr schulde I se with syghte  
 Byfore me hym vnhorsed bee,  
 The noble knyge that made me knyght."  
 E.M.V. 2190.  
 146. 4. "Whan the king was horsyd there,  
 Launcelot lokys he vpon,  
 How corteise was in hym more  
 Than euyr was in any man." *Id.* 2198.  
 6-10. These lines again are almost identical with E.M.V.  
 15. "Bors was as breme as any bore." *Id.* 2214.  
 147. 5. past the fetlocks.  
 "Stedys that were bolde and snelle (quick)  
 Amonge hem waden in the blode." *Id.* 2234.  
 19. Rochester. In the prose *Lancelot* it is 'Gloucester.' Geoffrey (XI. 3) also speaks of Theon, a bishop of Gloucester, afterwards made Archbishop of London. Theon, according to Godwin, *de Presulibus*, was translated from Gloucester to London in 553, and fled to Wales in 586. But there was no bishop of Gloucester from Saxon times till the reign of Henry VIII., and hence the author of the E.M.V., whom Malory follows, has probably substituted Rochester for Gloucester owing to the fame of some well-known bishop of that See, possibly Walter de Merton, who was bishop of Rochester, 1274 to 1277, and was also Lord Chancellor. (See note on 164. 4, and Introduction, p. xx.)  
 20. bulls under lead, i.e. with leaden seal ; the document itself took the name of 'bull' from the *bull* or capsule of the seal. The Golden Bull was an edict of Charles IV. with a golden *bull*. This passage is again closely parallel to the E.M.V.  
 148. 26. shower, 'shoure' in Caxton ; which looks like a mistake for 'stoure.' See Gloss.  
 149. 2. eight days, i.e. this day week. Fr. *huit jours*, the first and last days being included.  
 4. say largely, 'make ample defence (and make it good) against all but the king and Gawaine.' Cf. 150. 5.  
 10-20. This passage closely follows the E.M.V.

150. 10. *Hars ye have listened.*

"Bot lyers lystenes thow to lye

Off whom alle this word oute spronge." *Id.* 2402.

15. at many times ... fight for her, e.g. when she was accused by Sir Mador (see note on 102. 29); and when she was carried off by Meliagrance (M. xix. 1-9).

28. Note the influence of the Ordeal by Battle, in which the vanquished was always held guilty.

152. 30. *fifteen days, quinze jours*, a fortnight. Cf. 149. 2.

34. *maugre thy head*, here seems to mean, not as in 131. 11 and 143. 22, 'in spite of thee,' but 'in spite of' or 'at the risk of thy life.'

153. 14. *Troilus*. The story of Troilus was the subject of a Latin poem by Joseph of Exeter and of the French *Roman de Troie* by Benoit de Sainte More, both of whom wrote in the second half of the twelfth century. It was familiar to all in Malory's time owing to the poem of Chaucer, whose sources were Boccaccio and Guido delle Colonne (see note on 1. 16). This passage does not occur in E.M.V., and it seems therefore probable that it is Malory's own. Such a piece of moralizing does not strike one as appropriate to the scene.

33. *pyke thee*. 'Steal away.' Malory in another passage says, "that damoyssel pyked her away privily" (M. ix. 44).

156. 3. *Cardiff*. *Caer Taff*, the castra on the Taff, was probably a city and port in the Romano-British time. Llandaff, close by, was the seat of a very early bishopric, said to have been founded in the fifth century.

25. *ware and wise*. This looks as if it were a misunderstanding of the E.M.V.

"Lyonelle spekys in that tyde

That was of warre wyse and bolde."

2556.

The next four lines are clearly taken from this version, except that the "blow on their nails" is Malory's own. Cf. "And Dick the Shepherd blows his nail" (Shakespeare, *Love's Labour's Lost*, v. 2).

157. 4. *in holes us hide*. Cf.

"Yiff that they ouer oure landys ryde

Alle to noght they might us bringe

Whyhe we in holys here us hyde."

E.M.V. 2569.

And the remainder of the paragraph closely corresponds to this version.

35. *held their language*, 'ceased talking,' 'held their tongue.'

158. 16. *called upon*. Cf. "appealed" in line 34.



24. **spake on high.** This speech is rather too long for the occasion. No wonder that Gawaine calls it "babbling."

159. 24. **grace and gift.** Gawaine here undoubtedly appears with the characteristics of a solar hero (see Introduction, p. xv).

160. 19. **you.** This second accusative resembles that after "bereft," in 142. 8.

30. **searched and salved.** See G.N. ix. 1 (g).

33. **if .. out bring.** From the E.M.V., 2933.

161. **Part V.** For the source, see note on Parts III. and IV., p. 223. Many passages are again taken from the E.M.V.

19. **Parliament.** This, of course, is not in the original romance. It seems due to the influence of the times, and may be compared with the Parliament choosing the young Edward IV. as King.

21. **fifteen days.** See 152. 30.

162. 20. **shot great guns.** This is not in E.M.V., and could not of course be in the earlier romance.

**prevail Sir Mordred, i.e. 'avail.'** See G.N. II. 11 (2).

30. **book, and bell, and candle.** In the greater excommunication pronounced only by the highest ecclesiastical authority, a bell was rung in a peculiar mode, a book containing the anathema was used in its delivery, and a candle was solemnly extinguished after the act, to indicate that the person excommunicated and anathematized was put out of the pale of the Church (Lee *Gloss. Liturg. Terms*).

34. **Also where ye noise and that is not so, and therefore.** Two explanations are possible: (1) One of the 'ands' marks the apodosis, (2) the first 'and' = also, and is a repetition of the first 'also.' See G.N. VII. 1 (c). Cf. also the difficult passage, 172. 33.

163. 18. **write writs, i.e. summoned them to parliament.**

21. **war and strife.** Cf.

"They sayd, 'With hym was joye and wele,  
And in Arthur's tyme but sorow and woo.'"

E.M.V., 2964.

27. **Lo ye, all Englishmen.** In this disquisition on the character of Englishmen, which is due to Malory himself, may again be seen the influence of the Wars of the Roses, with their constant changes of fortune.

164. 4. **Dover.** Geoffrey has Rutupi (Bk. xi. c. 1). *Rutupae* (the modern Richborough), near Deal, was in fact the great port for traffic between England and Gaul in the time of the Romans. Its place was taken in later times by Dover, and this substitution is an interesting instance of the tendency of each successive writer or compiler of the romance to make the outward dress of the story fit in with the facts of his own time (cf. note on 147. 19).

11. **carracks** (see Gloss.) are not, as in Dr. Sommer's Glossary, small, but huge ships. (See Cotgrave.) Chaucer has

"And now hath Sathanas, seith he, a tayl  
Brodder than of a carrik is the sail."

Somnour's Prol. 23.

Skeat, in his Glossary, gives 'barge,' but cf. the *N.E.D.*, which quotes also Shakspeare (*Comedy of Errors*, III. ii. 140), where the word is used of the Armada.

165. 5. **blood**, *i.e.* kin.

13. **weakly**. This is, I think, a mistake of the Globe edition. Caxton printed 'weykely,' which is probably equivalent to 'waykely,' the word he prints in 171. 6. 'Waykely' means 'carefully' (see Glossary). In 64. 1, Caxton printed it 'wekely,' rightly rendered 'weakly.'

15. **Unto Sir Launcelot**. Gawaine's passionate desire for vengeance is overcome by his loyalty to Arthur.

166. 7. **at the date of this letter**. Neither the grammar nor the logic is clear. He means, of course, 'This letter is written when I have but a few hours to live.'

15. **receive his Saviour**. See 53. 6.

20. **skull**. This is alluded to by Caxton in the Preface (see 3. 7). According to the prose *Lancelot*, Gawaine's body was removed to Camelot.

166. Ch. II. Tennyson's *Passing of Arthur* should be read carefully with this chapter.

168. 13. **month day**. See G.N. IX. 5 (c).

26. **and charged them**, 'and charged them, in any wise and (if) they might, (to) take a treaty.' See G.N. II. 6 (a).

169. 13. **adder**. This incident is contained in the E.M.V., but not in the prose *Lancelot*.

170. 14. **unhappy**, in the sense of 'unlucky.'

23-27. These spirited lines are Malory's own, as is also the gruesome addition of Mordred thrusting himself up to the burr of the spear.

171. 6. **weakly**. 'Waykely' in Caxton, *i.e.* 'carefully.' See 165. 13.

14. **pillers**. The scene of the 'pillers' is, no doubt, a mournful recollection of the scene after many of the battles of the Wars of the Roses. It does not occur in E.M.V. nor, according to the summary in Sommer (*O.S.* III. 267), in the prose *Lancelot*.

172. 3. This last scene has been very closely followed by Tennyson, but, beautiful and touching as his lines are, they hardly add to the simple dignity and pathos of Malory's prose.

31. **waters wap.** E.M.V. has

"But watres depe and wawes wanne." 3465.

'Wap' seems to be onomatopœic.

33. **Who would have wend.** See G.N. ix. 5 (d).

173. 23. **three queens.** See 174. 36.

34. **vale of Avilion**, or 'Avalon,' the Celtic home of the dead. On its identification with Glastonbury, see note on 2. 30.

174. 4. **two holts hoar.** See note on 180. 15.

36. **Morgan le Fay.** She appears here very inconsistently with the story of Accolon (Pt. i. ch. iv.). The Queen of Northgalis is always associated with Morgan. They had enchanted Launcelot (M. vi. cc. 3, 4), and also the lady who was 'as naked as a needle,' whom Launcelot delivered (M. xi. 1).

175. 1. **the Queen of the Waste Lands**, perhaps the same as Peredur's mother in the 'Conte del Graal,' or Percivale's aunt in the 'Queste.' Nimue is the lady who gave Arthur his sword; but their identification is of no importance, as they do not in this connection belong to the original romance, the passage 174. 32 to 175. 14 being Malory's addition.

22. **Hic lacet.** For the inscription as said to be found by Giraldus, see note on 2. 30.

30. **Almesbury**, Amesbury, near Salisbury. The name is said to be connected with its reputed founder, Aurelius Ambrosius. A Benedictine nunnery was founded in the tenth century by Queen Elfrida, and in 1177 the nuns were expelled by Henry II. for dissolute living. It was a favourite retreat for ladies of high rank, and received Mary, the daughter of Edward I. Queen Eleanor, wife of Henry III., died there (Murray's *Guide Book to Wiltshire*). According to Layamon, Guenever took the veil at Caerleon.

176. 30. Bors is again the man of action, rebuking Launcelot's tendency to over-many words. Cf. 134. 4.

177. 31. **Requiem.** In the "Prayers for the Dead," the sentence said by the priest after each Psalm is "Eternal Rest give unto them, O Lord."

178. 36. **that .. to have.** See G.N. ix. 5 (b).

179. 2. **as sinful**, supply 'folk.'

6. **forsake ... wrake.**

"For my loue now I the pray  
My company thow aye forsake,  
And to thy kyngdome thow take thy way  
And kepe thy reme from werre and wrake."

F.M.V., 3663.

10. **flower of kings**, the *flos regum* of the Chroniclers.

**180. 3. grey or white.** This looks like a reference to the Franciscans and Carmelites, both of which Orders were established in England in the middle of the thirteenth century.

**15. betwixt two cliffs.** One would like to identify this with the famous gap at Cheddar, within a few miles of Glastonbury (cf. 174. 4), and not more than a day and night's ride (less than fifty miles) from Amesbury. A Roman road ran along the summit of the Mendips, where extensive lead mines were worked by the Romans from an early time. In 182. 3 the hermitage appears to be at Glastonbury itself.

**182. 2. seven.** There were eight counting Bors. See 181. 11, and cf. 182. 23.

**4. thirty miles.** This is too little, see preceding note

**5. feeble to go.** See G.N. II. 6 (b).

**19. Dirige.** The first Latin word of a verse (*Ps.* v. 8) in the Funeral Psalms beginning, 'Direct my steps,' which anciently stood as an antiphon to those Psalms in the old English Service for the Dead: hence the modern 'dirge' (Lee, *Gloss. Liturg. Terms*).

**25. frankincense ... incensed.** See G.N. IX. 3.

**184. 2. rights.** So in Caxton. Cf. 52 23 and note.

**19. alleth nothing but good,** a forcible, if illogical, expression.

**185. 2. nine.** There are only eight really.

**19.** For the lament of Sir Ector, one of the most beautiful passages, we are indebted entirely to Malory. It is hard to understand how anyone after reading this can say that "his own contributions to the story are beneath contempt."

**31. that thou.** See G.N. IV. 3 (f).

**186. 12. Constantine.** This is derived from Geoffrey, who has taken apparently three of the five kings assailed by Gildas in his *Epistola*, and made them the successors of Arthur. In Gildas they may well all be contemporaries. He calls Constantine "*immundae leaenae Damnoniae tyrannicus catulus*." For Gildas, see Introduction, p. x. Constantine is therefore probably a historical personage.

**187. 3. forty.** A mistake for fifty.

**9. ninth year, i.e. A.D. 1470.**

**11 and 12.** These lines are intended to end the book with a rhyming couplet.

## APPENDIX.

### THE HOLY GRAIL.

Malory's "noble tale of the Sancgreal" is taken with but little alteration from the "*Queste del Saint Graal*," one out of many versions of this most popular legend, which forms the third part of the great prose romance of *Lancelot*, the whole of which is attributed, though probably wrongly, to Walter Map. On the origin of the Grail stories the last word has by no means yet been said. To discuss this question fully is beyond the scope of the present work, but an attempt will now be made to put before the reader some account of the various versions, and of the questions which they involve. For a full account of the Grail literature, the reader is referred to Nutt's *Studies on the Legend of the Holy Grail*, which contains not only a summary of the different versions, thus rendering them accessible to all, but a long and exhaustive criticism of the views of the chief writers on the subject. The following outline is taken from Mr. Nutt's book, and it is hoped that this will render more intelligible the story as told by Malory, and also serve as a useful introduction to those who wish to study for themselves this intricate and obscure question.

#### I. THE VARIOUS VERSIONS.

These may be arranged as follows :

**A. Le Conte del Graal.** French poem by four authors

1. Chrestien de Troyes. (Poem begun in 1189 at latest.)
2. Gautier de Douzens. (Date uncertain.)
3. Manessier. (Written between 1214 and 1227.)
4. Gerbert. (Written probably between 1216 and 1225.)

**B. Joseph d'Arimathie and Merlin**, by Robert de Boron. Written between 1170 and 1212, in two French versions: (1) metrical, (2) prose.

**C. Perceval**, (in Didot ms.) or **Petit Saint Graal**. This

is a prose sequel to *B*. Date ascribed to beginning of thirteenth century.

*D. Queste del Saint Graal.* Ascribed in the ms. to Walter Map or Mapes, who died in 1210. French prose romance.

*E. Grand St. Graal.* French prose romance, ascribed in ms. to Robert de Boron.

*F. Parzival.*<sup>1</sup> German metrical romance, by Wolfram von Eschenbach. (Written between 1200 and 1210.)

*G. Perceval le Gallois.* French prose romance, written before 1225.

*H. Mabinogi of Peredur, son of Ewrawc.* Welsh prose romance found in Red Book of Hergest. Translated in Guest's *Mabinogion*. (Peredur = Perceval.)

*I. Sir Perceval of Galles.* English metrical romance. (Date about 1225 ?)

*K. Heinrich von dem Türlin.* Diu Crône, an independent German version of certain adventures of which Gawaine is the hero.

(*N.B.*—Versions *H* and *I* contain no mention of the Grail, but as being 'Perceval' legends belong to the series.)

It will be noticed that this great body of romance came into existence in England, France, and Germany within a space of fifty years. The question now is to determine the relative age of these versions, and to find the oldest form of the story.

## II.—TWO FORMS OF THE LEGEND: (1) QUEST, (2) EARLY HISTORY.

On comparing the subject-matter of these various versions with each other, it will be found that they treat of two separate and distinct stories: (1) the Quest, (2) the Early History of the Grail. The versions may now be arranged thus:

Version.	Subject Treated.	Hero.
<i>B</i> and <i>E</i> ,	Early History.	
<i>A</i> ,	Quest,	(1) Perceval, (2) Gawaine
<i>D</i> ,	Quest,	(1) Galahad, (2) Perceval, (3) Bors.
<i>C</i> , <i>F</i> , <i>G</i> , <i>H</i> , <i>I</i> ,	Quest,	Perceval.
<i>K</i> ,	Quest,	Gawaine.

But in nearly all the versions of the Quest type reference will be found to the Early History, and *vice versa*, and in version *E* reference is made to Galahad as the promised knight.

The two forms of the legend will now be considered with the object of ascertaining which is the older. If the Early History is the older, the origin of the legend is probably purely Christian

<sup>1</sup> This is the version used by Wagner.

and the Celtic element is an accident. But if the Quest is the older, the origin is Celtic and the Christian element has come in later.

(1) **Quest.** Perceval is the hero in the majority of the versions; for this reason and for others (which cannot here be stated) we conclude that the 'Perceval' form is the older type. We may now briefly summarize the chief incidents of the story of the Quest, bearing in mind that they appear under different forms in different versions. Britain will not be freed from enchantments till the Court of the Fisher King is found. This Fisher King has been wounded by incautiously picking up the pieces of a broken sword with which his brother was treacherously slain, and will not be cured till the promised knight shall come, avenge the blow, and mend the sword. The hero, after many adventures, finds the Fisher King's castle, and sees the bleeding lance, grail, and holy dish. He should have asked what they meant, but does not. He returns again (or even a third time) after, as in some versions, slaying the murderer, and again sees the three magic talismans. He asks what they mean. He mends the sword, and the Fisher King is healed and afterwards dies in peace. Britain is freed from enchantments, and the Fisher King turns out to be the hero's uncle (or grandfather). The Fisher King is thus identical with the grail keeper. The grail itself has miraculous powers of feeding. The Quest itself is thus of a twofold nature—a Feud Quest and an Unspelling Quest.

(2) **Early History of the Grail.** Here again we must remember that the incidents vary in different versions, but the resultant of the whole is as follows:

The grail is the vessel which our Lord used at the Last Supper. It was given by Pilate to Joseph, who received in it the blood flowing from Christ's wounds. It sustained him miraculously in prison, and after his release was used to test the faith of his followers. It was brought to England by Joseph (versions *A*, *D*, *E*), or by Brons (*B*, *C*), and was finally confided by Joseph to his brother-in-law, Brons, to be kept until the coming of Brons' grandson (versions *B*, *C*), or was left in charge of Alain, son of Brons, from whom it passed to his brother Josue, in whose line it remained till the good knight should come (version *E*). Version *F* (Wolfram) has an entirely different account of the grail, which, being later, need not be considered. The grail, it will be noticed, has physical as well as spiritual properties.

A careful comparison of these two forms of the legend (see Nutt, ch. iii.) leads to the conclusion that the Quest form is the older, and that therefore the origin of the legend is Celtic. Mr. Nutt then arranges the various versions which he examines, in the following order:

1. *A.* (1) Chrestien, the oldest form of the Perceval Quest.
2. *A.* (2) Gautier de Douzens.
3. *B.* Boron's poem.
4. *D.* Queste del Saint Graal.
5. *E.* Grand St. Graal.
6. *A.* (3) and (4) Manessier and Gerbert's continuations of the Conte del Graal.
7. *C.* Didot Perceval or Petit Saint Graal.

The other versions seem to be admittedly later. Here it should be stated that Birch-Hirschfeld, the great exponent of the theory of the Christian origin of the legend, would place the versions in a different order, Chrestien being made later than Boron. The sources from which Boron drew, according to Birch-Hirschfeld, are Christian legend and Breton sagas; and the introduction of the marvellous food properties of the grail, the bleeding lance, and the dish, are ascribed by him to Chrestien. But this Mr. Nutt shows to be at least unlikely. We now come to the next point for consideration.

### III. THE CELTIC COUNTERPARTS OF THE LEGEND.

These must be shortly stated. The Quest has its counterpart in *The Lay of the Great Fool* (for which see Nutt, p. 160). The 'Great Fool' is the counterpart of Chrestien's *Perceval*, and of the Mabinogi *Peredur*. This lay is one of a class designated by Hahn, "Aryan Expulsion and Return Formula," which figures in the literature of all Aryan races (cf. Perseus, Theseus, Romulus and Remus, Cyrus, Krishna). This lay also belongs to the 'twin brother cycle.' The influence of this may be seen in the dualism as to heroes of the Conte. The lance and the sword and the dish figure in Celtic tales, and to all the main incidents of the Quest counterparts may be found in Celtic tradition; and, finally, the grail itself is the magic cauldron of Bran in the Mabinogi of Branwen, the daughter of Llyr (see Guest's *Mabinogion*).

Further, in the Early History, the Brons version, although later in date than the Joseph version, seems to represent an older and purer form of the Early History, the object of which is to relate the story of the conversion of Britain. Now Brons has his counterpart in Bran, the representative, according to Professor Rhys, of an old Celtic god of the nether world. But Bran is also the keeper of the magic cauldron. There is also a Bran the Blessed, the hero of a conversion legend; and in the confusion between Bran, Lord of the Cauldron, and Bran the Blessed, Mr. Nutt sees the first step in the transformation of the *Peredur-Perceval sage* into the Quest of the Holy Grail.

Joseph, as also the hero of a conversion legend, has taken the place of Brons, whose magic gear has become the instruments of the Passion. For the connection between Glastonbury and the legend, see the note on 2. 30.



In conclusion, it should be said that, while the Celtic origin of the Quest seems to be fairly well established, there is yet much difficulty as to the way in which the Christian element was introduced. The identification of Brons with Bran is shadowy, and the substitution of Joseph for Brons is not as yet fully explained. But with this caution we may adopt Mr. Nutt's account of the growth of the legend, which may be summarized as follows:

(1) An original 'saga mass,' containing tales of three types, (a) Feud Quest, (b) the Expulsion and Return formula, (c) 'Unspelling' Quest. (2) Bran, the lord of the Land of Shades and of the Cauldron of Healing, becomes Brons, the apostle of Britain, his pagan attributes suffering a Christian change, perfected when Joseph took the place of Brons. A portion of the story has thus become Christianized. (3) The Joseph legend is developed more fully.

"The History of the Legend of the Holy Grail is thus the history of the gradual transformation of old Celtic folk-tales into a poem charged with Christian symbolism and mysticism" (Nutt, p. 227).

#### IV. MALORY'S SOURCE.

In the *Queste del Saint Graal*, from which Malory took his story, we find the Joseph legend developed at great length. Brons is discarded. Perceval, the old Celtic hero, is supplanted by Galahad, while a third hero, Bors, and fresh adventures are introduced to glorify the virtue of chastity. The moral aspect of this romance has been discussed in the Introduction.

From a literary point of view, the author of the '*Queste*' made a distinct advance by associating the Quest of the Grail with Arthur's court as a whole. The isolated adventures of separate knights have acquired under his hand a definiteness and unity which were before entirely wanting, and have gained thereby a distinct dramatical interest. Malory has here followed his original authority more closely than in any other portion of his story.

## GLOSSARY AND INDEX TO GRAMMATICAL NOTES.

*N.B.*—The following Glossaries and Dictionaries have been consulted: *New English Dictionary*, Mayhew and Skeat's *Dictionary of Middle English*, Halliwell's *Dictionary of Archaic and Provincial Words*, Cotgrave's *French-English Dictionary*, 1650, Dr. Sommer's *Glossary*, Skeat's *Glossary to Chaucer*.

**A** (with numerals). See G.N. III. 2.

**abash**, *vb.* to cast down, to terrify, but used *intr.*, 42. 3. See G.N. II. 11 (4). In passive, 76. 5.

**ado**, *sb.* trouble, difficulty, 20. 35.

**adread**, *p.p.* frightened, put in dread, 19. 5.

**advise**, *vb. refl.* bethink oneself, consider, reflect, 111. 33. (*N.E.D.*)

**affiance**, *sb.* trust, 9. 1 (see note); 164. 32. (Cf. the prayer for the Queen in the Litany.)

**afore**, *prep.* and *adv.* before, 13. 21, 35.

**againsay**, *vb.* contradict, break, 46. 4.

**aligement**, *sb.* alighting, alleviation (M.E. *a-leggen*, to lay down, put aside, allay), 74. 24.

**alight**, *vb. pret.* See G.N. II. 4 (a).

**all**, *adv.* See G.N. v. 3.

**allegiance**, *sb.* apparently another form of 'aligement' (see above), 121. 29.

**almeries**, *sb. pl.* aumbries, cupboard (O.F. *armaire*, Lat. *armarium*), 101. 8.

**also**, *adv.* even so, 92. 20. See G.N. v. 3.

**alther**, *gen. pl.* of 'all.' See G.N. III. 4.

**an**, and, *conj.* See G.N. VII. 1.

**anon**, *adv.* at once (A.S. *on ane*, in one (moment)), 19. 6.

**appealed**, *p. p.* accused, appealed (see Cotgrave, *appeler*), 158. 34.

**araged**, *vb.* put in a rage, rendered furious (O.F. *arager*), 91. 35.

**aretted**, *p. p.* of 'arrete'—to reckon, count, accuse (Lat. *reputare*), 2. 27.

**as**, *conj.* See G.N. IV. 3 (h); VII. 2.

**assay**, *vb.* to examine, try, attack, 18. 15, 98. 17.

**assoll**, *vb.* to absolve, 180. 25.  
**at**, *prep.* See G.N. vi.  
**avail**, *sb.* advantage, 18. 20.  
**avaunt**, *sb.* boast, vaunt, 71. 21.  
**avoid**, *vb.* to leave, quit, of a horse, to dismount from (*N.E.D.*), 149. 28, 159. 20.  
**awayward**, *adv.* away, 110. 5.  
**barget**, *sb.* a little barge, 122. 11.  
**battle**, *sb.* a battalion, 9. 23, 146. 22.  
**bay**, *sb.* 'close quarters with a barking dog' (O.F. *abai* = barking), *N.E.D.*, 159. 1.  
**be**, *vb.* See G.N. II. 2.  
**be-**, *prefix* See G.N. VIII  
**beames**, *sb.* trumpet (A.S. *béme*), 169. 19.  
**bear**, *vb.* See 74. 11 and note.  
**becomen**, *p.p.* See G.N. II. 4(b).  
**been**, *pres. plu.* See G.N. II. 1 (b).  
**begripe**, *vb.* seize, take hold of (A.S. *begripan*), 80. 30.  
**beguile**, *vb.* to cheat, disappoint (*N.E.D.*), 45. 27.  
**behest**, *sb.* promise, 1. 23, 120. 27.  
**behoveth**, *vb. pres.* belongs, befits, is due to (*N.E.D.*), 50. 17, but see G.N. II. 10.  
**bereave**, *vb.* See G.N. II. 11 (1)  
**besant**, *sb.* a gold coin coined originally by Constantine the Great in Byzantium, 174. 17.  
**beseem**, *vb.* fit or beseem, 55. 23; seem, appear, 95. 7.  
**beseen**, *p.p.* equipped (A.S. *biseon*, to look about), 20. 14, 119. 1.  
**bestad**, **bested**, *p.p.* placed, circumstanced, imperilled, 25. 3, 154. 7.  
**besweat**, *vb.* See G.N. VIII.  
**betaken**, *p.p.* committed, entrusted, 13. 1. See G.N. II. 4 (b).

**betaught**, *pret.* of 'betechen,' to entrust, 54. 7.  
**betide**, *vb.* to happen (A.S. *tidan*), 170. 23.  
**betook**, *pret.* of 'betake,' to entrust, commit, 16. 34, 105. 10, 114. 9.  
**blessed**, *vb. pret.* crossed, 80. 7.  
**board**, *sb.* deck of a ship, 25. 18, 78. 33.  
**boot**, **bote**, *sb.* remedy, 137. 32, 178. 18.  
**both**, *conj.* in sense of 'also,' 78. 29. See G.N. VII. 3.  
**brachet**, *sb.* a dog that hunts by scent, 25. 6.  
**brast**, *pret.* of 'burst.' See G.N. II. 4 (c).  
**brim**, *adj.* fierce, furious, 146. 15. (Origin uncertain. See 'breme' and 'brim' in *N.E.D.*)  
**brunt**, *sb.* sharp blow, 160. 10. (Origin unknown. See *N.E.D.*)  
**bur**, *sb.* iron ring below the grip of a spear, originally the knob at the base of a deer's horn, 170. 34.  
**burgeneth**, *vb. pres.* of *burgene*, to bud, blossom, 125. 1.  
**but**, *conj.* See G.N. VII. 4.  
**by**, *prep.* See G.N. VI.  
**caitiff**, *adj.* captive, miserable, 117. 36.  
**Candlemass**, February 2nd. See note on, 13. 25.  
**cankered**, *p.p.* corrupted, 165. 6.  
**cantel**, *sb.* a corner or piece cut off, 18. 24.  
**carrack**, *sb.* a huge ship (O.F. *caraque*), 164. 11. See note.  
**careful**, *adj.* full of care, 183. 10.  
**cast**, *vb.* imagine, conceive, 104. 28; purpose, design, 119. 23.  
**causen**, *vb. pres.* See G.N. II. 1 (b).

**cered**, *p.p.* waxed (Lat. *cera*), 182. 33.  
**certes**, *adv.* certainly, 68. 8.  
**chaflet**, *sb.* a little scaffold or platform, 167. 17. (O.F. *chafaut*, cf. Fr. *échafaud*.)  
**charged**, *p.p.* laden, 91. 24.  
**chariot**, *sb.* cart, 122. 9.  
**cheer**, *sb.* (1) face (Late Lat. *cara*), 48. 26, 31. 12 (see note). (2) What cheer? = What is your state or mood? how are you? 27. 7; cf. of good cheer, 139. 18. (3) Of welcome, 48. 23, 93. 30. (4) Provisions, food, 25. 21. (See *N.E.D.*)  
**child**, *sb.* young knight or page, 39. 16, 78. 30.  
**chivalry**, *sb.* knights of Christendom, 4. 7; knightly deeds, 4. 17, 74. 3.  
**clean**, *adj.* pure, clean, 100. 2, 121. 16; *adv.* entirely, 55. 29, 68. 16.  
**cleanness**, *sb.* purity, 68. 11.  
**cleped**, *p.p.* of clepen, called (A.S. *cleopian*), 98. 25.  
**clerk**, *sb.* clergyman, scholar (Lat. *clericus*), 101. 1.  
**coif**, *sb.* cap, 77. 11.  
**comen**, *p.p.* See G.N. II. 4 (b).  
**condescended**, *p.p.* agreed (Lat. *condescendo*; cf. O.F. *condescendre*), 168. 35.  
**conjure**, *vb.* to entreat, 50. 17.  
**conning**, *sb.* learning, knowledge, 3. 34.  
**conversant**, *pres. p.* dwelling in (Lat. *conversor*), 80. 19.  
**courtliest**, *adj.* most courteous, 185. 33.  
**courtlage**, *sb.* a little court or garth (Med. Lat. *curtilagium*), 66. 12.  
**covered**, *p.p.* spread, laid, 52. 2.  
**covetise**, *sb.* greed, avarice, 54. 1.  
**craft**, *sb.* deceit, 21. 23.

**danger**, *sb.* power (Fr. *danger*, Lat. *dominiarium*), 'in my danger' = 'at my mercy,' hence it came to mean peril, danger (see Brachet), 18. 33.  
**dash**, *vb. intr.* See G.N. II. 11 (4).  
**deadly**, *adj.* mortal, 99. 25; *adv.* deadly slain, 54. 14.  
**deal**, *sb.* deal, share, 'every deal' = 'every bit,' 158. 13; *vb.* with modern sense of 'act,' 'deal,' 128. 2.  
**debonair**, *adj.* (O.F. *devonaire*), meek, good natured, 81. 27.  
**deeming**, *sb.* judgment, opinion (A.S. *dēman*, to judge, think, doom), 127. 23, 174. 14.  
**defend**, *vb.* forbid (Fr. *défendre*), 51. 22, 153. 14; repel, keep off (Lat. *defendere*), 17. 29.  
**depart**, *vb.* separate, 51. 14, 19, 74. 1, 154. 34; in modern sense of 'to go from,' 51. 18; to cause to depart, to send out, 96. 34.  
**departition**, *sb.* separation, 46. 14.  
**depraved**, *p.p.* slandered (Lat. *depravare*, to distort), 163. 23.  
**despite**, *sb.* contempt (Lat. *despectum*, acc.), 91. 4.  
**despoiled**, *p.p.* stripped (O.F. *despoiller*; Lat. *despoliare*), 138. 27.  
**devised**, *vb. pret.* arranged, ordered (A.F. *deviser*; late pop. Lat. *divisare*, freq. of *dividere*), 8. 36, 33. 13; examined carefully, 88. 3. See *N.E.D.*  
**devoir**, *sb.* knightly duty, 169. 30.  
**did off, did on**. See G.N. II. 7 (u).  
**dight**, *vb. pret.* prepared, 25. 8, i.e. broke up, or gralloched.  
**Dirige**. See note on 182. 19.

- do, *vb.* See G.N. II 4 (b); 7 (a).
- dole, *sb.* sorrow, grief, 13. 3; a dealing out, a distribution (cf. *deal*), 177. 23.
- doubted, *vb. pret.* hesitated, 57. 4.
- doubteth, *vb.* fears, 137. 16.
- drad, *vb. pret.* See G.N. II 4 (c).
- dress, *vb. lit.* to make straight (O.F. *dresser*; Late Lat. *directiare*, from *directus*), cf. military use 'right dress,' 53. 2, 74. 7; to direct, 52. 28, 86. 31, 88. 18; to prepare, 16. 10, 24, 69. 13. See also G.N. II 11 (4).
- drive, *vb.* to pass, rush, 45. 6.
- dured, *vb. pret.* endured, lasted, 177. 35.
- duress, *sb.* hardship, 59. 24.
- dwine, *vb.* to waste away (A.S. *dwīnan*), 183. 20.
- eased, *vb. p. p.* made easy, made comfortable, 85. 15, 171. 8.
- eft, *adv.* again (A.S.), 172. 27.
- either, *pron.* See G.N. IV 4.
- elders, *sb.* ancestors, 35. 25.
- enbushed, *p. p.* either 'taken in an ambush,' or perhaps 'entangled in a bush or thicket,' 25. 2.
- enchafe, *vb.* heat (cf. Fr. *chauffer*), 57. 33, 63. 2, 70. 23, 116. 9.
- endlong, *adv.* along, 'overthwart and endlong,' i.e. 'across and along,' 'breadthways and lengthways,' 181. 1.
- endure, *vb.* See G.N. II 11 (1).
- eneled, *p. p.* (= aneled) anointed, i.e. with extreme unction (O.E. *ele*, oil), 184. 8.
- enforced, *vb. pret.* endeavoured, strove, 90. 32.
- enprised, *vb. p. p.* undertaken (Late Lat. *in-prendere*), 3. 36.
- ensure, *vb.* to assure, promise, 56. 23, 27.
- entreat, *sb.* treaty, 8. 13; *vb.* to make a treaty, 8. 12.
- errant, *adj.* wandering (O.F. *errer*, vulgar Lat. *iterare* = *itinerare*, N.E.D.), 34. 14.
- erst, *adv.* formerly (superlative of *er* = *ere*), 71. 24.
- espies, *sb.* spyings, 117. 7.
- estate, *sb.* state, rank (Lat. *statum*), 4. 11, 45. 1.
- every, everyeach, *pron.* See G.N. IV 4.
- fain, *adj.* glad, 78. 2; *adv.* gladly, 61. 7.
- fangle, in the expression 'new fangle,' i.e. catching at novelty (cf. A.S. *fāngen*, to take), 164. 8.
- feebled, *vb. pret.* 'becameweak,' 121. 15. See G.N. II 11 (3).
- felon, *sb.* villain, traitor, connected with 'fel,' base, cruel, treacherous, 81. 27.
- felonously, *adv.* cruelly. See above, 146. 20.
- feutered, *vb. pret.* put their spear in the rest (O.F. *feutre*, lit. = felt, hence a felt-lined socket for a spear), 146. 19.
- fiendly, *adj.* hostile, hating (A.S. *fēon*, to hate), 74. 28.
- fleet, *vb.* to float (A.S. *fleotan*), 40. 30.
- foin, *sb.* a thrust, 170. 31.
- foining, *verbal sb.* thrusting, lunging, 169. 25.
- for-, *prefix.* See G.N. VIII.
- for, *conj.* because. See G.N. VII 5.
- for, *prep.* See G.N. VI.
- for-bled, *p. p.* having lost blood, 136. 2. See G.N. VIII.

**force**, *sb.* matter, consequence, 20. 4; I take no force = I care not, 110. 2.

**forecast**, *sb.* that which is designed or purposed beforehand. See 'cast,' 133. 19.

**forethink**. See 'forthink.'

**forethought**, *pret.* of forthink, *q.v.*, 92. 36.

**forgive**, *vb.* to give over, cease, 71. 31.

**forsooth**, *adv.* truly, indeed (M.E. *soth* = truth), 50. 20.

**forth-days**. See G.N. v. 1 (b); far advanced in the day, 132. 32.

**forthink**, *vb.* to repent (A.S. *for* and *thyncan*, to mean, intend), 46. 12, 91. 11.

**foster**, *sb.* apparently for 'fores-ter,' 67. 34.

**fulfil**, *vb.* used in literal sense of 'fill full' (cf. 'fulfilled with thy grace,' in the last prayer in the Communion Service), 40. 8, 87. 26.

**garnish**, *vb.* either 'to furnish,' i.e. 'get in supplies,' or in the original sense of 'to defend' (Fr. *garnir*; A.S. *wearnian*, to defend. See Brachet), 7. 12.

**gave**, *vb. pret.* in sense of 'mis-gave,' failed, was filled with doubt, 128. 13.

**german**, *adj.* of the first degree (Lat. *germanus*), 110. 32.

**gird**, *p.p.* See G.N. II. 4 (a).

**giveth**, *vb. pres.* in sense of 'misgives' (see 'gave'), 110. 31; leans to, is inclined to, 88. 20, 104. 16.

**glaiue**, *sb.* sword (O.F. *glaiue*; Lat. *gladius*. See Brachet), 135. 21.

**goodly**, *adv.* kindly, 99. 2.

**grant**, *vb.* to agree, 26. 25, 126. 6.

**grounden**, *p.p.* See G.N. II. 4 (b).

**guise**, *sb.* manner (Fr. *guise*, of German origin, O.H.G. *wise*), 112. 11.

**haberjon**, *sb.* a piece of armour to defend the neck and breast (O.F. *hauberjon*, from *hauberc*; O.H.G. *halsberc*, neck defence), 70. 10.

**hackney**, *sb.* a horse, but not a war horse (O.F. *haquenée*), 55. 11, 113. 16.

**haft**, *sb.* handle, 172. 14.

**halp**, *vb. pret.* of 'help.' See G.N. II. 4 (c).

**handle**, *vb.* with the sense of 'catch,' 134. 25, 156. 25.

**happed**, *vb. impers.* See G.N. II. 10.

**harbour**, *sb.* lodging, shelter, Icel. *herbergi* (lit. army-shelter), 71. 16, 84. 19; *vb.* to shelter, lodge, 71. 1.

**hard**, *adv.* See G.N. v. (a), with difficulty, 50. 25; as a *sb.* see note on 84. 16.

**harder**, *adj.* hardier, bolder, 81. 13 and note.

**hauberk**, *sb.* a coat of ringed mail (see 'haberjon'), 52. 13.

**haut**, *adj.* high (Fr. *haut*), an epithet of Galahad, 42. 27.

**have**, *vb. subj.* See G.N. II. 5 (c).

**heavy**, *vb.* to make heavy. See G.N. II. 11 (2).

**hie**, *vb.* to hasten (M.E. *higen*; A.S. *higan*), 172. 6.

**helping**, *sb.* in the phrase 'was turned unto helping,' i.e. had begun to mend (?), 53. 17.

**hight**, *p.p.* was called. See G.N. II. 4 (c).

**him**, *his*, *pron.* See G.N. IV. 1.

**holpen**, *p.p.* of help. See G.N. II. 4 (b).

**holt**, *sb.* wood, or woody hill, 174. 4.

**housled**, *p.p.* of *M.E. huslen*, to administer the Eucharist, 184. 8.

**hoved**, *p.p.* remained, waited about (*M.E. hoven*), 43. 32, 107. 5.

**hurled**, *vb. pret.* rushed about, 109. 13.

**hurling**, *sb.* rushing about, 139. 6.

**hurtle**, *vb. pret.* dashed, 18. 28; *hurling, pres. p.* 108. 12.

**inly**, *adv.* extremely, 56. 30. Chaucer has 'inly glad,' *Troilus*, l. 640.

**instantly**, *adv.* pressingly, 2. 11.

**intermeddled**, *p.p.* mixed (*O.F. medler, mesler*; Late Lat. *misculare*, from *miscere*), 91. 32.

**intermit**, *vb.* to thrust between, interfere, 73. 16.

**into**, *prep.* See *G.N.* vi.

**is**, *vb. pres. plu.* See *G.N.* ii. 1 (a).

**jesserance**, *sb.* cuirass of fine mail (*O.F. jazerant*), 44. 20.

**journey**, *sb.* day's work or travel (*Lat. diurnus*), 76. 20. See also 84. 16 and note.

**justs**, *sb. pl.* tournaments (*Lat. juxta*), but we have 'a justs' in 11. 12, 102. 8; 'that justs,' 103. 11. See note on 11. 12.

**keep, keeping**, *sb.* heed (*A.S. cepan*, to heed), 52. 6, 59. 10; *vb.* pay regard to, 134. 4.

**kind**, *sb.* natural disposition (*A.S. cynde*), 88. 28.

**knell**, *vb.* to ring, 181. 4.

**laid**, *p.p.* See note on 122. 9.

**largeness**, *sb.* bounty, apparently for 'largesse,' 35. 5.

**leach, leech**, *sb.* doctor (*A.S. læce*), 17. 2, 19. 35, 77. 31.

**leaved**, *adj.* covered with leaves, 106. 21.

**left**, *vb. pret.* remained. See *G.N.* ii. 11 (4).

**let**. See *G.N.* ii. 7 (b).

**lever**, *adj.* or *adv.* dearer, sooner, rather (see 'lief'), 19. 2.

**lief**, *adj.* dear (*A.S.* and *M.E. leaf*, dear), 23. 20, 172. 34.

**like**, *adv.* See *G.N.* v. 3.

**liketh**, *vb. impers.* See *G.N.* ii. 10.

**list** (1) *sb.* desire, 181. 15; (2) *vb.* See *G.N.* ii. 10.

**long**, *prep.* See *G.N.* vi.

**longed**, *vb. pret.* belonged, was meet, 10. 5, 41. 9, 95. 32.

**loth**, *adj.* unwilling, unpleasant (*A.S. lath*), 16. 23.

**lusty**, *adj.* pleasant, gay, joyous, 8. 15, 125. 1.

**maiden**, *sb.* unmarried man or woman, 100. 2.

**mails**, *sb. pl.* mail armour (*O.F. maille*; *Lat. macula*), 50. 2.

**makers**, *sb.* authors (cf. the *Gk. ποιητής*), 186. 28.

**mal-engine**, *sb.* wicked artifice (*Lat. malum ingenium*), 131. 8.

**marches**, *sb. pl.* borders, border lands, 83. 12.

**mastery**, *sb.* See note on 12. 25.

**maugre**, *sb.* ill-will (*Fr. mal gré*), 135. 15, 142. 33; *prep.* in spite of, 17. 27, 152. 34 and note.

**me**, *pron.* See *G.N.* iv. 1 (d).

**mean**, *sb.* See *G.N.* i. 1.

**meddle**, *vb.* to mix, fight (cf. *Fr. mêlée*), see 'Inter-meddle,' 73. 23.

**merry**, *adj.* pleasant ('merry England' is 'pleasant England'), 21. 30.

**mesel**, *sb.* leper, leprosy (Late Lat. *misellus*, dim. of *miser*), 84. 34.

**mickle**, *adv.* greatly (A.S. *micel*), 90. 32.

**mile**, *sb.* See G.N. i. 1.

**mischieved**, *p.p.* injured, damaged (O.F. *més* = *minus* and *chef*), 43. 5.

**miscreants**, *sb.* unbelievers. (O.F. *mescreant*—*més* = *minus* and *créant* from Lat. *crendentem*), 186. 35.

**miscreature**, *sb.* a monster, or possibly another form of 'miscreant', 80. 5. Cf. 79. 36.

**month day**, 168. 13. See G.N. ix. 5. (c).

**more**, *adv.* for 'again,' 17. 35.

**much**, *adj.* great. See G.N. iii. 1.

**ne**, *adv.* not. See G.N. v. 2.

**near**, *adv.* See G.N. v. 1 (a).

**needs**, *adv.* See G.N. v. 1 (b).

**new-fangle**. See 'fangle.'

**nigh**, *vb.* to approach, 159. 12. See G.N. ii. 11 (3).

**nis**, for 'ne is.' See G.N. v. 2 (d).

**nist**, for 'ne wist.' See G.N. v. 2 (d).

**noise**, *sb.* rumour, 43. 9; *vb.* to rumour, spread a report, 162. 34.

**no, not**, etc., *double negative*. See G.N. v. 2 (e).

**nold**, for 'ne would.' See G.N. v. 2 (d).

**not for that, not for then**. See G.N. v. 3.

**of**, *prep.* See G.N. vi.

**offending**, *sb.* offence, damage, 81. 5.

**on**, *prep.* on back, on sleep, See G.N. vi.

**one**, *adj.* See G.N. iii. 2.

**or**, *prep.* and *conj.* See G.N. vi. and vii.

**orgule**, *sb.* pride (A.S. *orgel*; cf. O.F. *orguel*), 183. 12.

**orgulous**, *adj.* proud, 34. 21; as *adv.* in 153. 30.

**orison**, *sb.* prayer (A.F. *orison*, Church Lat. *orationem*), 182. 25.

**ouches**, *sb.* another form of M.E. and O.F. *noucne*, clasp, jewel, 149. 20. Cf. *Exodus*, xxviii. 11.

**overthwart**, *adv.* across, 181. 1. See 'endlong.'

**pain**, *sb.* trouble, penalty (O.F. *peine*; Lat. *poena*), 12. 17. 133. 4 (and note).

**palfrey**, *sb.* saddle horse (A.F. *palefrei*), 78. 18.

**party**, *sb.* side, 71. 8; on both parties, 8. 3.

**passing**, *pr. p.* as *adv.* surpassing, very, 7. 7.

**Paynim**, *sb.* strictly 'heathendom,' but also a heathen, pagan, 1. 14, 98. 30.

**pieces**, *sb. pl.* of armour, in the phrase 'armed at all pieces,' i.e. 'fully armed,' 158. 6.

**pight**, *vb. pret.*, pitched, 8. 1, 62. 22.

**pill**, *vb.* to plunder, 171. 14.

**pillers**, *sb.* plunderers, 171. 14.

**points**, *sb.* in the phrase 'to do battle at all points,' i.e. 'with all arms on horse and foot,' 28. 35.

**pommel**, *sb.* knob, boss, handle of sword (O.F. *pomel*; Lat. *pomum*), 31. 9. Cf. 172. 14.

**preciously**, *adv.* apparently an equivalent of the Fr. *pré-*



*ciousement*, very carefully (see Littré), 45. 28.  
*prevail*, *vb. tr.*, 162. 20, in sense of 'avail.' See G.N. II. 11 (2).  
*prime*, *sb.* the hour of dawn or 6 a.m., 28. 10. See note.  
*prise*, *sb.* catching, death of a hunted beast (Cotgrave), 25. 8.  
*proress*, *sb.* reputation, 26. 14; bravery, 51. 26.  
*purvey*, *vb.* provide, 8. 24.  
*purveyance*, *sb.* provision, 145. 2.  
*pyke*, *vo.* to steal, 153. 33. Cf. pick-pocket.  
*quick*, *adj.* alive (A.S. *cwic*), 127. 33.  
*ransack*, *vb.* to search, probe (of wounds), 53. 12.  
*rased*, *vb. pret.* scraped, tore off (O.F. *raser*; Late Lat. *rasare*, freq. of Lat. *radere*), 19. 4; but see 'rushed.'  
*rashed*, *vb. pret.* rushed, 130. 15.  
*rashing*, *sb.* rushing, tearing about, 130. 17, 139. 6.  
*recover*, *sb.* recovery, 148. 16.  
*recreant*, *adj.* defeated (O.F. *recreant*, giving up the contest; Late Lat. *recredentem*), 18. 35.  
*rede*, *vb.* advise (A.S. (*ge*)*rédan*), 17. 25.  
*renomme*, *sb.* renown (O.F.), 4. 20.  
*report*, *vb.* in 'I report me,' i.e. 'I appeal or declare,' 43. 17, 120. 23, 123. 33.  
*requiem*. See note on 177. 31.  
*resemblant*, *sb.* appearance, 57. 29. See 'semblant.'  
*reverence*, *sb.* worship, or service (?), 39. 24, 50. 14.  
*rewarded*, *vb. subj.* See G.N. II. 5 (b).  
*riden*, *p.p.* of ride. See G.N. II. 4 (b).

*right*, *adv.* straight, 'right as = 'even as,' 29. 23. Cf. Chancer, *Melibeus*, §5, "that she *right now* were dead."  
*rivage*, *sb.* bank, shore (Lat. *ripa*), 97. 18.  
*rushed*, *vb. pret.* in 'rushed off his helm,' i.e. tore off, 32. 17. See 'rased' [connected with O.F. *arracher*, to tear off (?)].  
*Sacring*, *sb.* consecration, 91. 18.  
*samite*, *sb.* a rich silk stuff (O.F. *samit*; Late Lat. *examitum*; Late Gk. *ἐξάμιτρον*; cf. Ger. *samt*, velvet), 20. 3.  
*sancgreal*, *sb.* holy cup. See note on p. 38.  
*sarpys*, *sb. pl.* girdle (O.F. *escharpe*, from O.H.G. *scherbe*), 149. 18.  
*saw*, *sb.* saying (A.S. *sagu*), 118. 14.  
*save*. See G.N. VII. 7.  
*schedule*, *sb.* a letter, note (Lat. *schedula*, dim. of *scheda*), 165. 11.  
*scripture*, *sb.* writing, 11. 3, 98. 3.  
*search*, *vb.* to examine, probe (cf. ransack), 19. 36.  
*seems*, *seemeth*, *vb. impers.* See G.N. II. 10.  
*self*, *pron.* See G.N. IV. 2. 'Self day' = 'same day,' 99. 14. See note.  
*semblant*, *sb.* appearance (A.F.), 90. 25.  
*sendel*, *sb.* fine stuff, linen or silk (O.F. *sendal*, so called, because brought from India, from Skt. *Sindhu* = Indus, or *Scinde* (Skeat)), 42. 20.  
*seneschal*, *sb.* steward, 14. 33.  
*shend*, *vb.* harm, ruin (A.S. *scendan*), 157. 1.

**Sher-Thursday**, *sb.* the Thursday in Holy Week. Perhaps derived from the habit of trimming the beard on that day. (*Lee, Gloss. of Liturgical Terms*), 96. 17.

**shower**, *sb.* 'shoure,' in Caxton, either an error for 'stoure' (*q.v.*) or = storm, tempest (*A.S. scúr*), 148. 26.

**shred**, *vb.* to cut (*A.S. scréadian*), 156. 29.

**shrived, shriven**, *vb. pret. and p.p.* confessed (*A.S. scrífan*, to prescribe penance, receive confession; *Lat. scribere*), 121. 16, 165. 14.

**sieges**, *sb.* seats (*Fr.*), 23. 31.

**signifieth**, *vb. sing.* See G.N. II. 1 (c).

**sin, sith, sithen**, *conj. and adv.* since. See G.N. v. 3; VII. 8.

**sitten**, *p.p.* See G.N. II. 4 (b).

**so**, *adv.* See G.N. v. 3.

**solace**, *sb.* pleasure, merriment, 49. 5.

**sondes**, *sb.* sendings, messages, 163. 11.

**Sooth**, *sb.* truth (*A.S. sóth*), 40. 23.

**soothly**, *adv.* truly, 66. 34.

**sore**, *adv.* sorely, painfully, 110. 2; or soundly, well, as in 25. 36; greatly, exceedingly, 137. 27.

**speed**, *vb.* to prosper, 45. 34.

**spiritualties**, *sb. pl.* apparently for 'holy places,' 'consecrated ground,' 100. 28. See note.

**stack**, *vb. pret.* See G.N. II. 4 (c).

**stalled**, *vb. p.p.* See note on 2. 2.

**stark**, *adv.* strongly, firmly, completely, utterly (*A.S. stearc*), 184. 32.

**start**, *vb.* to go quickly; of mounting a horse, 53. 4, 72.

4, 89. 22; *vb. pret.* 32. 8. See G.N. II. 4 (a).

**steven**, *sb.* voice (*A.S. stefn*; cf. *Ger. stimme*), 184. 1.

**stint**, *vb.* to cease, stop, *intrans.*, 115. 21; *trans.*, 126. 28; *sb.* 'ceasing,' 'ending,' and so apparently = 'loss,' 19. 21.

**stoure**, *sb.* conflict, commotion (*O.F. estour*; cf. *Icel. styrr*, a stir), 145. 19.

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**strake**, *vb. pret.* struck. See G.N. II. 4 (c).

**strength**, *vb.* to strengthen, to help to accomplish (?), 138. 31.

**stricken**. See G.N. II. 4 (b).

**stungen**, *p.p.* See G.N. II. 4 (b).

**sue**, *vb.* to follow, 52. 36; persecute, 158. 27.

**sufferance**, *sb.* permission, 121. 25.

**swallow**, *sb.* a whirlpool, tide race (?), 79. 21.

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**tale**, *sb.* account, reckoning (*A.S. talu*; cf. *O.H.G. zalu*), 47. 36.

**teach**, *vb.* to direct, 66. 3. See note.

**term**, *sb.* time, period, 163. 36.

**that**, *rel. pron.* See G.N. IV. 3; *conj.*, see G.N. VII. 9.

**them**, *pron.* See G.N. IV. 1 (d).

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**thrang**, *vb. pret.* of throng See G.N. II. 4 (c).

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**tide**, *vb.* to happen (A.S. *tidan*), 170. 23.  
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**to**, *prep.* See G.N. II. 6; and vi.  
**to-**, *prefix.* See G.N. viii.  
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**tomorn**, *adv.* to-morrow, 58. 21.  
**tourney**, *vb.* to take part in a tournament. See note on 11. 12.  
**toward**, *prep.* See G.N. vi.  
**traced**, *vb. pret.* traced his way, went, moved about, 160. 7.  
**travail**, *sb.* work, labour, 160. 12.  
**travers**, in the phrase 'at travers,' across (cf. Fr. *à travers*), 94. 16. See note.  
**traversed**, *vb. pret.* went across, 'dodged,' 160. 7.  
**traw**, *vb.* to trust, believe, 90. 17, 97. 34.  
**truncheon**, *sb.* broken piece of a spear-shaft (O.F. *tronchon*; Lat. *truncus*), 16. 28.  
**truss**, *vb.* pack, pack off (O.F. *trusser*), 58. 2, 155. 35.  
**ubby**, *sb.* sacramental wafer, oblation (O.F. *oublée*; Lat. *oblatum*), 95. 27.  
**underne**, *undorne*, *sb.* the time between, i.e. between sunrise and noon, or between noon and sunset (A.S. *undern*; cf. O.H.G. *untorn*; Ger. *untarn*), but it is used here, as sometimes in A.S., definitely for the beginning of that time or for 9 a.m. (see Bosworth, *A.S. Dict.*), 39. 33, 145. 5, 146. 12, 159. 25. It occurs only in one other place in Malory (Bk. vii. c. 19), where it seems to mean 'afternoon' or 'evening.'  
**unhap**, *sb.* ill-luck, 125. 7.

**unneth**, *adv.* scarcely (A.S. *un-eathe*, not easily), 39. 14.  
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**whether**, *conj.* = if. See G.N. VII. 15.

**which**, *rel. pron.* See G.N. IV. 3 (b), (c), (d).

**wight**, *sb.* active, strong, 104. 16, 128. 1.

**wightly**, *adv.* strongly, strictly, 168. 20.

**wilful**, *adj.* See note on 110. 28.

**willed**, *p.p.* See G.N. II. 11 (5).

**wist**, *vb.* See 'wit.'

**wit**, *vb.* to know (A.S. *witan*), 33. 21; *pres.* wot, 47. 25, 79. 8; wote, 12. 35; wotest, 19. 12, 96. 15; *pret.* wist, 12. 4, 23. 3, 38. 21. See G.N. II. 5 (a).

**wit**, *sb.* wisdom, intelligence, 103. 6.

**with**, *prep.* See G.N. VI.

**withsay**, *vb.* contradict, oppose, 41. 24.

**witting**, *sb.* knowing, knowledge, 79. 33.

**wonder**, *adj.* wonderful, 76. 24. Chaucer has 'what is this wonder maladye?' *Troilus*, I. 419.

**wonderly**, *adv.* wonderfully, 7. 10.

**wood**, *adv.* madly, 56. 11.

**worship**, *vb.* to honour, or bring honour on, 43. 22; *sb.* honour, 18. 20.

**worshipfully**, *adv.* honourably, 10. 2.

**worts**, *sb. pl.* plants, vegetables (A.S. *wyrt*), 66. 13.

**worth**, *vb. subj. pres.* may become, may be, 33. 1. A.S. *weorthan*. See G.N. II. 5 (c).

**wot**, *vb.* See 'wit.'

**wote**, *vb.* See 'wit.'

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**wrake**, *sb.* vengeance, misery (A.S. *wracu*), 126. 11

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